REALSIMPLE

LIFE MADE EASIER

SWEET
WAYS TO
HONOR
MOM

Get It Done!

Super-Easy Steps to Declutter, Beautify, or Transform Any Area of Your Life





REDUCE, REUSE, REPLACE

Reducing your plastic waste footprint is easier than you think—and it can start by saving your sprayer from your favorite home cleaning product. By following a simple REDUCE, REUSE, REPLACE practice with SC Johnson's new refills, you can reduce plastic waste and make a lasting impact with ease.



REDUCE

Reducing plastic waste can be achieved with small, simple solutions. And SC Johnson is making the task even easier with its new refill bottles, which use up to 32%* less plastic.

REUSE

Reusing your sprayer from Windex®, Scrubbing Bubbles® Foaming Bleach and Fantastik® Bleach cleaning products furthers efforts to ensure a better tomorrow. The sprayers are designed to last you for up to 8 bottles of your favorite SC Johnson refill!

REPLACE

By replacing your current SC Johnson cleaning products with their new refills, you will get the same cleaning power you know and can trust, while using less plastic—just be sure to toss the empty bottles into the recycling bin!









New Refills Available Now.







Plastic savings is 32% for Windex Original refill, 26% for Scrubbing Bubbles Foaming Bleach refill, and 25% for Fantastik Bleach refill. Plastic savings percentage is based on comparing the plastic content of the refill product (without sprayer) to the plastic content of the 32oz ready-to-use version (with sprayer) of the same branded product. Reuse your SC Johnson sprayer with the SC Johnson refill bottle of the same branded product, e.g. Windex" Sprayer for Windex" Product. See back-of-pack label for details.

Ocean Bound Plastic, in partnership with Plastic Bank, is post-consumer recycled plastic collected within 30 miles of an ocean or a waterway leading to an ocean, in countries with high volumes of uncollected plastic waste, which has been discarded or would otherwise be discarded into the environment.



A LITTLE STEP CAN HAVE A BIG IMPACT

Reuse your sprayer to help reduce plastic waste



New refills. Available now.







Visit PurpleLeashProject.com/PetMonth and see how you can join us and give hope to pets and people.

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OP STYLLING BY HEATHER GREENE FOR HELLO ARTISTS

MAY



"Can't count on no miracles. Sometimes, you just got to have a plan."

J.D. JORDAN, CALAMITY: BEING AN ACCOUNT OF CALAMITY JANE
AND HER GUNSLINGING GREEN MAN

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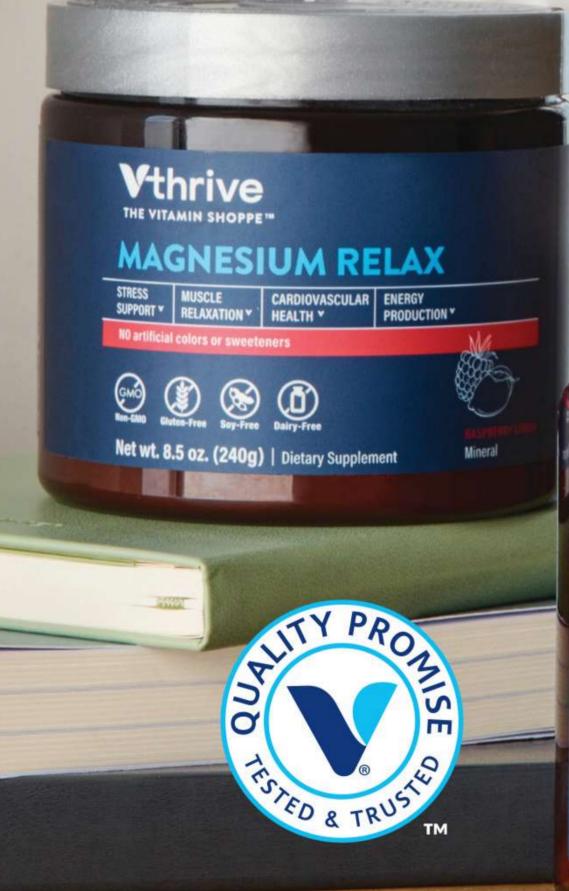
Self-care pros share no-fuss guides to full hair, clear skin, and more

Feel Like You Again

WITH

Wthrive

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MAGNESIUM RELAX

aids in calm and relaxation

RELAX & RESTORE

supports cortisol balance for a healthy stress response

MOOD BALANCE

enhances emotional wellbeing



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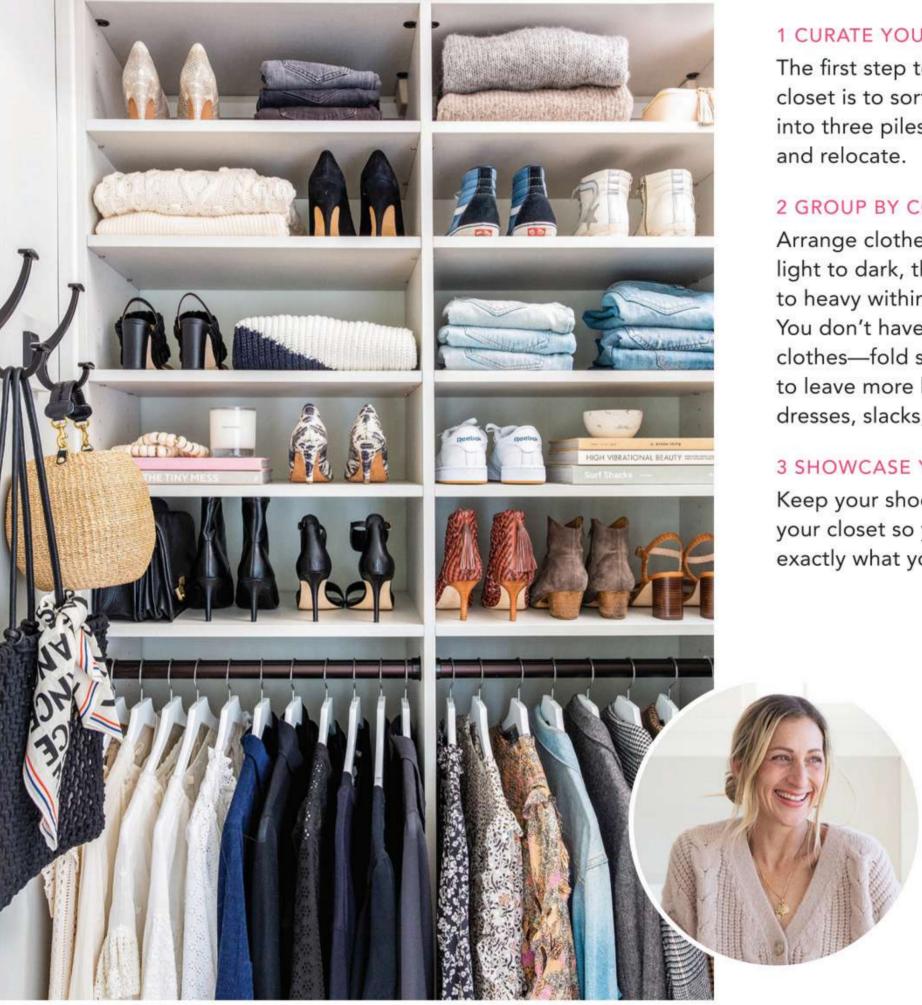
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Your Closet, Reimagined

PAIR HELPFUL TIPS FROM REAL SIMPLE WITH CUSTOM STORAGE SOLUTIONS FROM CALIFORNIA CLOSETS TO TRANSFORM YOUR CLOSET INTO A FUNCTIONAL AND INSTAGRAM-WORTHY SPACE. ORGANIZING EXPERT SHIRA GILL MAXIMIZES HER SMALL, SHARED CLOSET DESIGNED BY CALIFORNIA CLOSETS WITH THESE USEFUL TIPS.



1 CURATE YOUR CLOTHES

The first step to an organized closet is to sort your garments into three piles: keep, donate,

2 GROUP BY COLOR

Arrange clothes by color from light to dark, then lightweight to heavy within each shade. You don't have to hang all your clothes—fold sweaters and jeans to leave more hanging space for dresses, slacks, and blouses.

3 SHOWCASE YOUR SHOES

Keep your shoes visible within your closet so you can see exactly what you have.

> "The thoughtful, customized design from California Closets elevated our small, awkward space, and made it easy to contain and display all of our daily essentials."

> > - SHIRA GILL

Schedule a free design consultation. Whether you schedule a consultation in-home or virtually, work with a CALIFORNIA CLOSETS designer to discuss your vision, timeline, and budget. Your designer will create a 3D digital model of your future space. Together, you'll refine the design until it's exactly what you're looking for.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY CALIFORNIA CLOSETS

Getting It Done Without Doing a Thing



wasn't *Tiger King*, though I did watch it with the rest of Western civilization. (Which will be over first, this diversion or the pandemic?) And it wasn't *The Bachelor*, which I actually stopped watching for the first time in franchise history because I had enough anxiety in my real life; I didn't need theirs. It turned out to be BBC's *The Repair Shop*, which I stumbled upon during a solitary, quiet, seven-day visit to my mom's house in Ohio this winter.

The Repair Shop is to restoration what The Great British Baking Show is to Halloween Wars. Set in a barn on a bucolic field, the show features some of England's top craftspeople, who each have a bench and the ability to return a broken clock, wooden chest, old teddy bear, or stained-glass window to its former (and historically accurate) glory. But the show's heart is the love that three owners per episode have for the objects they bring in. Restoring this well-worn heirloom will mean a piece of family history gets passed down to the next generation.

As with all addictive shows, there's a formula. Owner presents story of object; viewers receive close-ups of wear and tear. *The Repair Shop*'s woodworker, silversmith, or soft-object refurbisher has never seen anything quite so interesting and shall try their very best. Always the work will be cut out for the expert. Always the owner will miss the object while it's in their care.

Voices are never raised in *The Repair Shop*, but things do get dicey. Can the teddy bear be restuffed in an authentic way but without wood filling, which won't get through customs in Australia, where the grandchild it will be passed to resides? Certainly the ceramist, one of the world's best, can glue the plate together again. But can she replicate the blue edge so the fix is invisible? She holds her breath as she paints the line.

Mom and I binged two or three episodes a night, and I climbed into bed with visions of backlit dust, fingers stroking emerald velvet cushion fabric, and steady tweezers putting the second hand on the pocket watch. For one week in March, *The Repair Shop* was where things got done (and I didn't have to do them), where everyone was calm and cordial and everything always turned out all right.

When I returned home to New Jersey, I couldn't find *The Repair Shop* on my convoluted TV menu situation. I let it go; my family might have made fun or been too bored to watch. But for one quiet, cozy week with my mom, it was the best show on television.



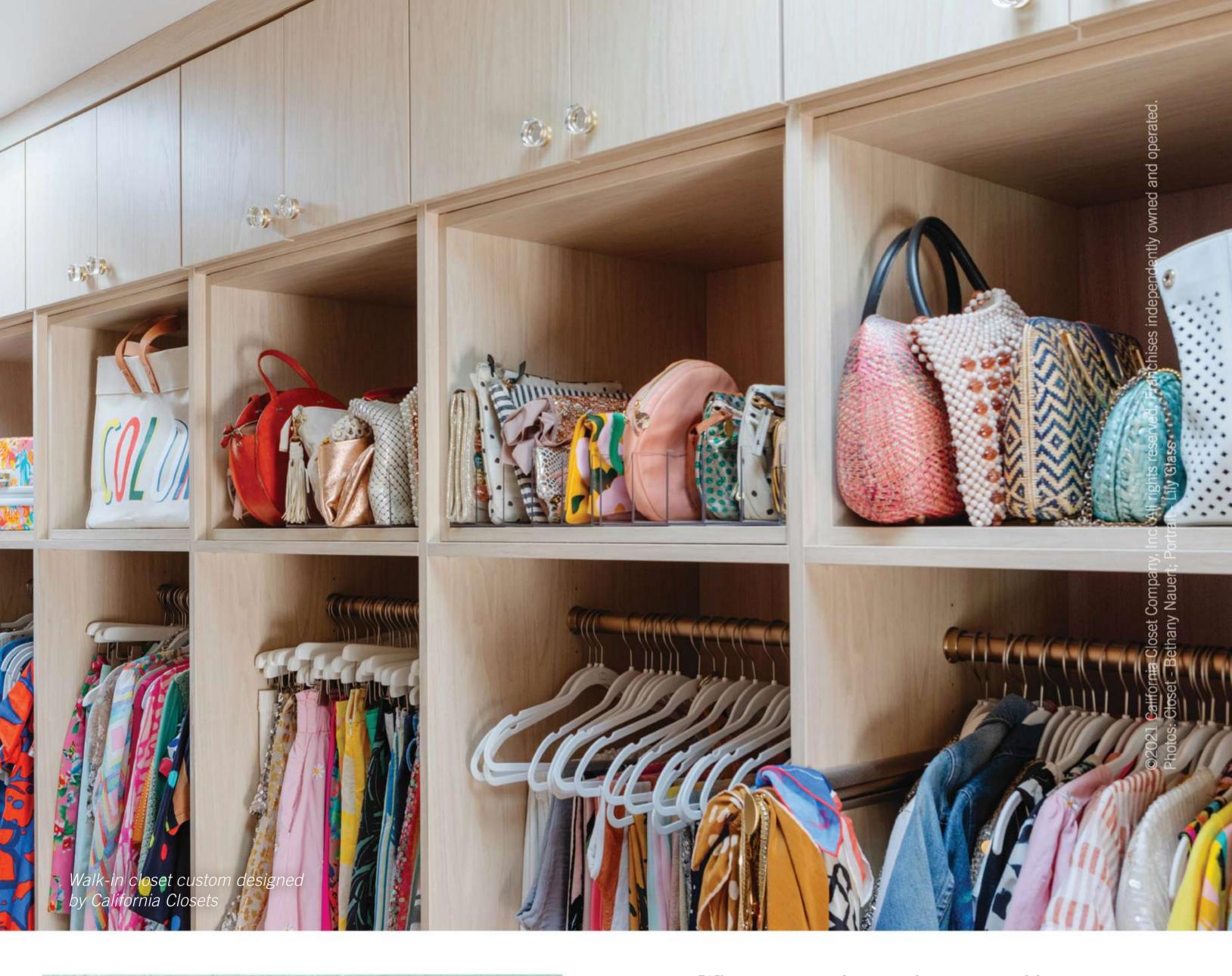
WELCOME, HOME!

In our October issue, we'll reveal our fourth annual REAL SIMPLE Home, filled with design and organizing ideas for every space in your life. Rome wasn't built in a dayand neither was this home. For the first time, we are doing a down-to-the-studs renovation. Find out more about the project at realsimple .com/rshome21.

Ø

Photograph by Tawni Bannister

LET'S CONNECT!
Follow me on Instagram at @LizVaccariello.





When you organize your home, everything finds its place in the story of your life.

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF ANDRIA LO: PETER ARDITO: COURTESY OF MANUFACTURER (3)

REAL SIMPLE Everywhere Find Exclusive Ideas, Tips, and Ways to Make Life Easier—Every Day



SCENES

Nancy

Jooyoun Kim

Author of The Last Story of Mina Lee

The coziest item in your home:

The home itself, which is small but full of love. The other day, I realized there are 20 limbs—two adults, two dogs, and a baby—sleeping in our bedroom.

Your next big purchase: A slightly bigger house.

What you're looking forward to:

Walking down the street and smiling at strangers again postpandemic. Isn't there something a little transformative about that?

Read Nancy's essay about cooking jjigae on page 106.



ON THE WEB

Incorporate Self-Care into Every Single Day

Putting yourself first takes practice. Fortunately, you can master the art of "me" time with our suggestions for nurturing your mind, body, and soul. Read the rituals at realsimple.com/simpleselfcare.

IN YOUR HOME

Strategies to Make a Clutter Purge Easier

Decluttering is a physical process, sure—and it's also an emotional journey. Learn how to tidy up without feeling down at realsimple.com/decluttering.



The Power of Positivity A SIMPLE OUTLOOK CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE Raise Your Tracklence of Semining Make Your Own Lick

REALSIMPLE

AT THE BOOKSTORE

Our Positivity Bookazine

Train your brain to look on the bright side with our new mental well-being bookazine, *The Power of Positivity.* The feelgood guide shares the proven benefits of optimism, helping to boost your mood.

IN YOUR CART

A Gift for Any Kind of Mom

Whether she covets fresh flowers or fancy face creams, our Mother's Day finds will remind her how much she's appreciated. Shop our gift guide at realsimple.com/momgifts.

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YOUR WORDS

What Moment in Your Life Do You Wish Had Been Photographed?

When I paid off my last student loan.

@ MELISSASUEWHO

#RSLOVE

I always want to remember the beauty in the small moments that make up our days: blowing out birthday candles, dancing with my family in the evening light, or gathering a bucket of summer cherries at the market. @NELLEMONACO



For sharing this photo with us, @nellemonaco will receive our new special edition, The Power of Less. If you want your picture to be considered, tag photos on Instagram with #rslove.

The day I went to the ocean, sat on an empty beach, and decided to start a family on my own.

It was a beautiful day, and I had left my phone in the car, which I never do.

Maybe I'll take a picture when I bring my kids back there one day.

@CAKES_HARRINGTON

My grad school graduation.

My mother videotaped the wrong person receiving her diploma! SHELLEY CARLTON, MARYVILLE, TENNESSEE Years ago, when
I was growing up
with my four sisters,
our dad flooded
half the backyard
so we'd have our
own skating rink.
We spent hours out

there, but I don't think we have any photographs of family and friends skating on the rink. Precious memories, for sure.

TONI ECKARDT, CHIPPEWA FALLS, WISCONSIN

The look on my face when I delivered a girl after three boys. We didn't know the gender and

the gender, and I expected a fourth boy.

@THEPERSISTENT WRITER

The morning of November 2, 1967,

when my parents, three brothers, and I stepped off an airplane from Cuba at Miami International Airport. As a 9-year-old, I had no way of knowing how different our lives would be because of that day.

ISORA CARBAJAL RUBLE, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

The moment my daughter tasted her first lemon.

@CHUCKTHEOFFICIAL

I was an elementary school educator for 32 years. I wish I had a photograph of myself teaching the students in my first classroom. That was the begin-

That was the beginning of a career that challenged me to be a lifelong learner and gave me much joy.

VALERIE GAESSER, KENDALL, NEW YORK

We took our kids on a surprise vacation, and I wish we had pictures of us telling them about it.
Our daughter was beyond excited.
Our son was terrified that we didn't pack enough clothes for the trip.

@BNMCKAY13

When I first saw my adopted dog, Teddy. This dog has caused so many moments of laughter and tears. I thought I knew patience before Teddy—little did I know! There's no way I could have made it through 2020 without him. SABRINA NICHOLSON, HEREFORD, ARIZONA

All the little
things you never
realize are the
last times. Sitting
around a table,
eating a meal and
talking; reading a
bedtime story when
they know all the
words. The everyday
stuff that builds
a life, not just a
posed, manipulated
moment.

@AMYKIZAKI

At 41, I earned a black belt in American-style karate. I have always regretted that my family did not even take a camera to the test. I certainly did not look pretty after hours of grueling exertion, but it would have spoken volumes.

SUSAN POWERS-HEALY, KALISPELL, MONTANA



Anna Marie Pavone, 71

What moment in your life do you wish had been photographed?
Saying goodbye to relatives

Saying goodbye to relatives at age 7 and boarding a ship to the U.S. from Italy.

The book you could read again and again:

The Fountainhead because it reinforces my determination to not compromise when I feel strongly about my dreams.

What's the coziest thing in your home?

My books. I have a special nook in my bedroom where I keep them. I was exposed to books at a young age, as my grandmother read to me on a regular basis. To this day, reading just gives me inner peace. Thank you, Nonna, for this beautiful gift!

Most recent bargain?

Leather leggings, marked down to \$99 from \$250. What a bargain and treat. Absolute delicious feel.

Most recent splurge?

Louis Vuitton handbag. Wearing it reminds me of beautiful Paris. It's not about a status symbol. I just love what the bag represents to me. You can't put a price on what gives you pleasure.

NEXT QUESTION

What family ritual that started during the pandemic do you hope to continue forever? Send an email to yourwords@realsimple.com and let us know your answer to this question. Your response could appear on these pages.

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DELIGHTS





1 A REAL KEEPER

Pin frogs are the secret to securing unwieldy stems. Plant one in your vessel and your arrangement will stay put. **TO BUY:** Flower Frog Collection, \$95 for 5; floretflowers.com.

2 FOREVER BUDS

Array these solo as wiltproof bouquets, or mix with live blossoms for textural variety. **TO BUY:** Dried Flowers and Grasses, from \$13; afloral.com.

3 THAT'S A WRAP

When you bring home flowers, this reusable denim tote is a clever and sustainable substitute for cellophane or paper.

TO BUY: Jardin Bouquet Tote, \$42; aplat.com.

4 LEAFY GREEN DIET

Prolong your foliage by adding two or three pumps of this plant food each time you refresh the water. **TO BUY:** Fresh Cut Flower Food, \$13; cutefarms.com.

5 HYDRATION HELPER

The spout on this displayworthy watering can is ideal for thirsty petals in narrow vases. **TO BUY:** Oasis Watering Can, \$30; shopgreendigs.com.

6 TAKE YOUR PICK

Need inspiration for your bouquet? This foragingfocused book includes 28 eco-friendly projects, plus care basics.

TO BUY: Field, Flower, Vase by Chelsea Fuss, \$30; abramsbooks.com.

7 LITTLE CUTIES

Sculptural porcelain bud vases give a single blossom or a few special sprigs a place to shine. **TO BUY:** Mini Vases, \$21 each; mkporcelain.com.

8 SHEAR JOY

Trim stems before putting them in water to fend off drooping. These lightweight, ergonomic snippers make the cut. **TO BUY:**Pruning Shears, \$18; modsprout.com.

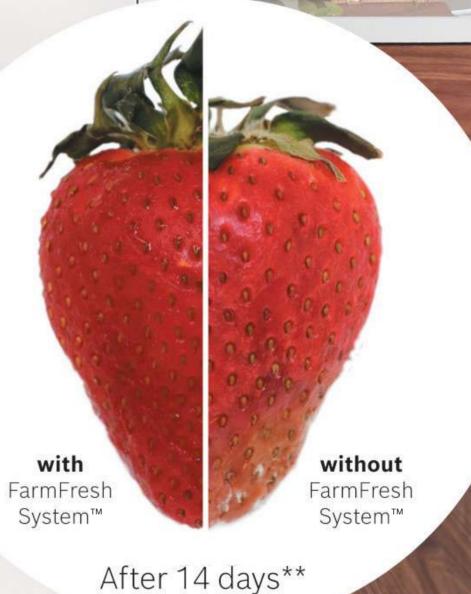
Preserve the foods you love up to 3x longer.*

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Automatic temperature & humidity control takes the guesswork out to keep your food fresh up to 3x longer.*



^{*}As compared to a Bosch refrigerator without FarmFresh System™. Results may vary among different foods.

^{**}Individual results vary depending on type, initial freshness and proper storage and use of food.



LIGHTENED LOAD

This workhorse is made from sturdy aluminum yet weighs only two pounds—so you can get the gardening done with less back pain. **TO BUY:**Ultra-Lightweight Garden Shovel, \$60; thegrommet.com.

It holds up to five feet of cords, keeping your counter tidy.



4

WIRE HIDER

Stick this heat-resistant orb to your toaster, slow cooker, or stand mixer and use it to reel in that pesky appliance cord when not in use.

TO BUY: The Cord Wrapper, \$25 for 2; thecordwrapper.com.



2

GO GO GADGET

This tool securely attaches to your phone and features a three-card wallet, a kickstand for easier video watching, and a loop for better grip. **TO BUY:**WalleyGrip, \$15; amazon.com.



BY BRANDI BROXSON



MULTITASKING PAN

Get dinner on the table faster than a short-order cook with this 12-inch divided aluminum pan.
Bonus: less cookware to wash! **TO BUY:** 3-in-1 Divided Sauté Pan, \$55; nordicware.com.



3

FORGET-ME-NOT SPOT

Hang this organizer near the front door and dangle clean masks from the hooks. Stow filters, sanitizer, and keys on the upper shelf. **TO BUY:** Modern Metal Face Mask Rack, \$50; uncommongoods.com.



6

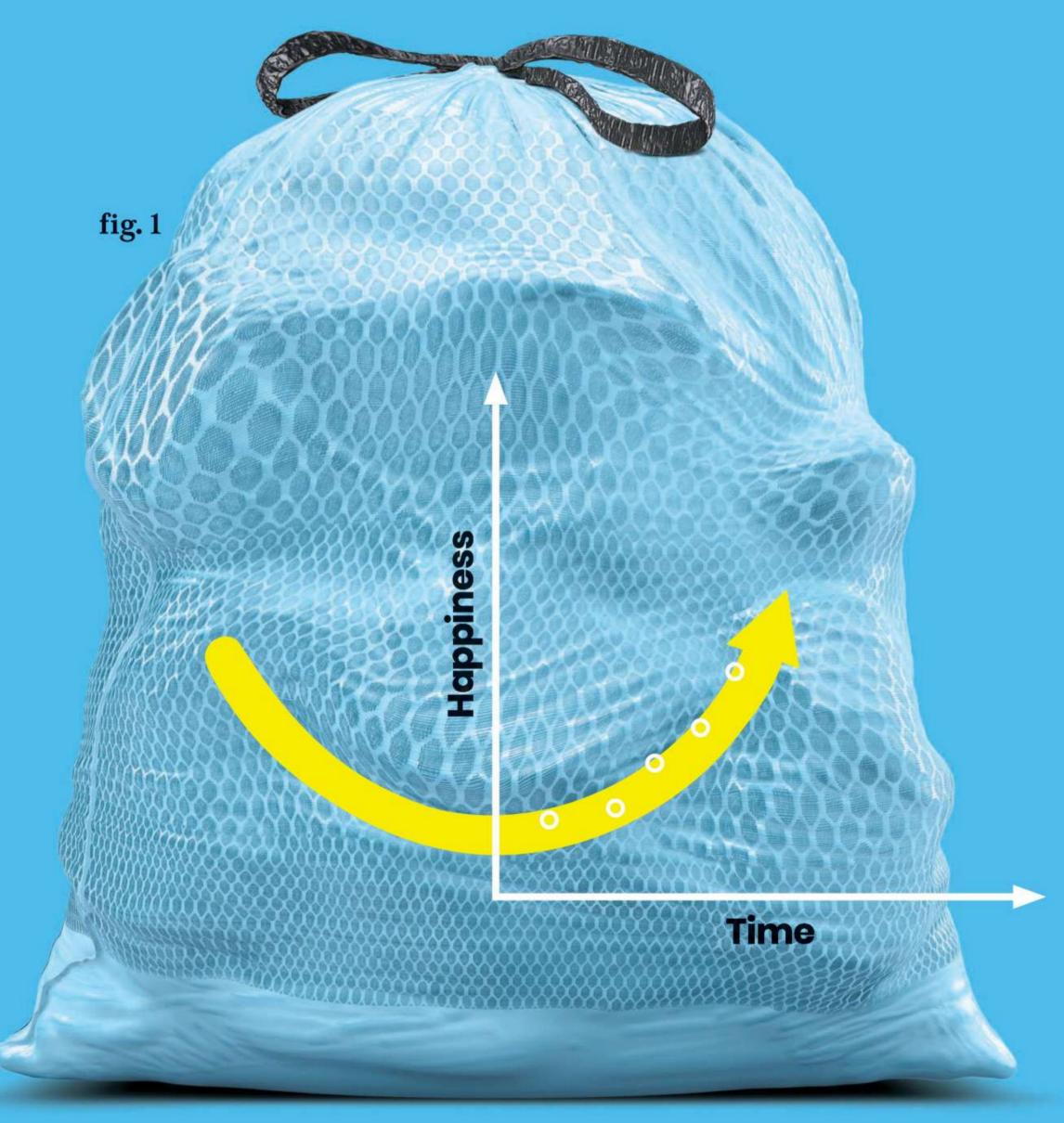
GROOM WITH A MEW

This brush mounts to a wall so Fluffy can groom herself, like the diva she is. Even better, the bristles collect loose hair to give you a break from vacuuming.

TO BUY: Senses 2.0 Self Groomer, \$5; catit.com.

The first trash bag worthy of a smile.

—— Glad® Beachside Breeze ——







Easy Peasy, Beachside Breeze-y

Glad® ForceFlexPlus with Febreze has fresh, long-lasting scents that will make you hate your trash just a little less.

The Books List Top Picks for Every Taste

BY KRISTYN KUSEK LEWIS

Book Club Winner

On the day of her daughter's high school graduation, happily married Flora Mancini is looking for an old photograph when she discovers an envelope containing her husband's wedding ring—the one he said he lost over a decade ago. Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney's Good Company is a smart and nuanced examination of the growing pains of long relationships, sure to spark great conversations about marriage, friendship, and parenthood.

Short Stories

A woman travels with her boyfriend to his sister's wedding and meets his high-spirited family for the first time. A man takes his recently widowed elderly father on a long-awaited trip to Scotland. The stories in Elizabeth McCracken's new collection, The Souvenir Museum, are witty, insightful, bittersweet, and charming pitch-perfect reflections of the seemingly ordinary moments that come to define us.

Dazzling Debut

A bold novel with an unforgettable protagonist. Dawnie Walton's The Final Revival of Opal & Nev reads like a rockand-roll docudrama. It tells the story of Opal, one half of an Afro-punk duo in 1970s New York. They're an unlikely pair—Nev is white and British; Opal is a Black American—and their rise to fame is upended by racial controversy. Decades later, when a potential reunion means confronting the past, tensions rise again, revealing the explosive power of speaking one's truth.

Emotional Portrait

Whereabouts, the new novel by Pulitzer Prize winner Jhumpa Lahiri (her first in nearly a decade), is a gorgeous, contemplative read about an unnamed woman's solitary—but not necessarily lonely life against the backdrop of an Italian city. Short, meditative chapters showcase her quiet existence in poetic prose that invites you to linger over the words. It's a fascinating look at the daily choices that make up a life.

Twisty Suspense

When Hannah Hall's husband, Owen, suddenly disappears, his goodbye is a simple note: "Protect her." She knows immediately he means her teenage stepdaughter. As FBI agents and U.S. marshals descend on their home. Hannah and the girl question Owen's true identity, and realize they must work together to uncover why he left. The Last Thing He Told Me by Laura Dave is a fast-moving, heartfelt thriller about the sacrifices we make for the people we love most.



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Streamline your shaving with this sleek five-blade razor. An Olay moisturizer clicks into the grippy matte handle. Press the button to dispense the cream—it comes out underneath the blades, so you don't have to worry about clogging. The freed-up space in your shower (bye, can!) is second only to how smooth your legs will feel, even if you skip after-shower lotion.

TO BUY: \$39; gillettevenus.com.

Venus







2 CLOUDLIKE COLOR

seconds, then swipe

off polish from base

to tip. **TO BUY:** \$18;

staticnails.com.

Nars Cosmetics Air Matte Blush Treat your cheeks

to the Cadillac of blush with this mousse (in eight shades) that imparts a happy glow and never looks clownish. **TO BUY:** \$30:

narscosmetics.com.

3 SKIN REFRESHER

Drunk Elephant Protini Powerpeptide Resurf Serum

We know, we know: another serum. But if yours is running low, try this one next. It brightens, firms, and plumps with just a few pumps every morning and night. **TO BUY:** \$82; sephora.com.





4 BETTER DIY DYE

Madison Reed Color Therapy Color Depositing Hair Mask

Scared of box dye but want to touch up at home? Instead of conditioner, use this mask twice a week to revive highlights or tone down brassiness. **TO BUY:** \$20; madison-reed.com.

5 HAIR REMOVAL ON THE MOVE

Dermaflash Mini

Stash this pinkie-size gizmo in your bag to remove cheek fuzz or a rogue chin hair as soon as you see, feel, or Spidey sense it. Then flip it over to depuff undereyes. **TO BUY:** \$59; dermaflash.com.

6 KNOT NIXER

Odele Leave-In Detangling Tonic

This fresh-scented mist melts postshampoo snarls, tames bedhead (on kids too), and—when misted onto dry curls—puts some spring and shine back into spirals. **TO BUY:** \$12; target.com.

7 SUSTAINABLE SUDS

Hey Humans Body Wash

The gender-neutral bottles serve the whole fam while the recyclable packaging serves the planet, all without costing an arm and a leg. **TO BUY:** \$6 each; target.com.



A Chance to Live Longer™

THE ONLY FDA-APPROVED CHEMO-FREE COMBINATION OF 2 IMMUNOTHERAPIES THAT WORKS DIFFERENTLY

In a study of newly diagnosed advanced NSCLC patients, half of those on OPDIVO + YERVOY were alive at 17.1 months versus 14.9 months on platinum-based chemotherapy.

Thank you to all the patients, nurses, and physicians in our clinical trials.

Results may vary. OPDIVO® + YERVOY® is not approved for patients younger than 18 years of age.

Indication & Important Safety Information for OPDIVO (nivolumab) + YERVOY (ipilimumab)

Only your healthcare professional knows the specifics of your condition and how OPDIVO in combination with YERVOY may fit into your overall therapy. The information below does not take the place of talking with your healthcare professional, so talk to them if you have any questions.

What are OPDIVO and YERVOY?

OPDIVO and YERVOY are prescription medicines used to treat people with a type of advanced stage lung cancer called non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). OPDIVO may be used in combination with YERVOY as your first treatment for NSCLC when your lung cancer has spread to other parts of your body (metastatic) **and** your tumors are positive for PD-L1, but do not have an abnormal EGFR or ALK gene.

It is not known if OPDIVO and YERVOY are safe and effective when used in children younger than 18 years of age.

What is the most important information I should know about OPDIVO and YERVOY?

OPDIVO and YERVOY are medicines that may treat certain cancers by working with your immune system. OPDIVO and YERVOY can cause your immune system to attack normal organs and tissues in any area of your body and can affect the way they work. These problems can sometimes become serious or life-threatening and can lead to death and may happen anytime during treatment or even after your treatment has ended. You may have more than one of these problems at the same time. Some of these problems may happen more often when OPDIVO is used in combination with YERVOY.

Call or see your healthcare provider right away if you develop any new or worse signs or symptoms, including

- Lung problems: new or worsening cough; shortness of breath; chest pain
- Intestinal problems: diarrhea (loose stools) or more frequent bowel movements than usual; stools that are black, tarry, sticky, or have blood or mucus; severe stomach-area (abdominal) pain or tenderness
- Liver problems: yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes; severe nausea or vomiting; pain on the right side of your stomach area (abdomen); dark urine (tea colored); bleeding or bruising more easily than normal

- Hormone gland problems: headaches that will not go away or unusual headaches; eye sensitivity to light; eye problems; rapid heartbeat; increased sweating; extreme tiredness; weight gain or weight loss; feeling more hungry or thirsty than usual; urinating more often than usual; hair loss; feeling cold; constipation; your voice gets deeper; dizziness or fainting; changes in mood or behavior, such as decreased sex drive, irritability, or forgetfulness
- Kidney problems: decrease in the amount of urine; blood in your urine; swelling in your ankles; loss of appetite
- Skin problems: rash; itching; skin blistering or peeling; painful sores or ulcers in mouth or nose, throat, or genital area
- Eye problems: blurry vision, double vision, or other vision problems; eye pain or redness

Problems can also happen in other organs and tissues. These are not all of the signs and symptoms of immune system problems that can happen with OPDIVO and YERVOY. Call or see your healthcare provider right away for any new or worsening signs or symptoms, which may include:

- Chest pain; irregular heartbeat; shortness of breath; swelling of ankles
- Confusion; sleepiness; memory problems; changes in mood or behavior; stiff neck; balance problems; tingling or numbness of the arms or legs
- Double vision; blurry vision; sensitivity to light; eye pain; changes in eve sight
- Persistent or severe muscle pain or weakness; muscle cramps
- Low red blood cells; bruising

Getting medical help right away may help keep these problems from becoming more serious. Your healthcare team will check
you for these problems during treatment and may treat you with
corticosteroid or hormone replacement medicines. Your healthcare
team may also need to delay or completely stop your treatment if you
have severe side effects.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before receiving OPDIVO and YERVOY? Before you receive OPDIVO and YERVOY, tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- have immune system problems such as Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, or lupus
- have received an organ transplant



- have received or plan to receive a stem cell transplant that uses donor stem cells (allogeneic)
- have received radiation treatment to your chest area in the past and have received other medicines that are like OPDIVO
- have a condition that affects your nervous system, such as myasthenia gravis or Guillain-Barré syndrome
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. OPDIVO and YERVOY can harm your unborn baby
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if OPDIVO or YERVOY passes into your breast milk. Do not breastfeed during treatment with OPDIVO or YERVOY and for 5 months after the last dose of OPDIVO or YERVOY

Females who are able to become pregnant: Your healthcare provider should do a pregnancy test before you start receiving OPDIVO or YERVOY.

- You should use an effective method of birth control during your treatment and for at least 5 months after your last dose of OPDIVO or YERVOY. Talk to your healthcare provider about birth control methods that you can use during this time.
- Tell your healthcare provider right away if you become pregnant or think you are pregnant during treatment with OPDIVO or YERVOY. You or your healthcare provider should contact Bristol Myers Squibb at 1-844-593-7869 as soon as you become aware of the pregnancy.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them to show your healthcare providers and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

What are the possible side effects of OPDIVO and YERVOY?

OPDIVO and YERVOY can cause serious side effects, including:

- See "What is the most important information I should know about OPDIVO + YERVOY?"
- Severe infusion reactions. Tell your healthcare team or nurse right away if you get these symptoms during an infusion of OPDIVO or YERVOY: chills or shaking; itching or rash; flushing; shortness of breath or wheezing; dizziness; feel like passing out; fever; back or neck pain

Complications, including graft-versus-host disease (GVHD),
 of bone marrow (stem cell) transplant that uses donor stem
 cells (allogeneic). These complications can be severe and can
 lead to death. These complications may happen if you underwent
 transplantation either before or after being treated with OPDIVO
 or YERVOY. Your healthcare provider will monitor you for these
 complications.

The most common side effects of OPDIVO when used in combination with YERVOY include: feeling tired; diarrhea; rash; itching; nausea; pain in muscles, bones, and joints; fever; cough; decreased appetite; vomiting; stomach-area (abdominal) pain; shortness of breath; upper respiratory tract infection; headache; low thyroid hormone levels (hypothyroidism); decreased weight; and dizziness.

These are not all the possible side effects of OPDIVO and YERVOY. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You are encouraged to report side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Call 1-800-FDA-1088.

OPDIVO (10 mg/mL) and YERVOY (5 mg/mL) are injections for intravenous (IV) use.

This is a brief summary of the most important information about OPDIVO and YERVOY. For more information, talk with your healthcare providers, call 1-855-673-4861, or go to www.OPDIVO.com.

Bristol Myers Squibb

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Meet the Owner

ELSIE LARSON

In her suburban Nashville breakfast nook,

A Beautiful Mess blogger Elsie Larson
opted for crisp white walls to brighten
up the space and provide a neutral
backdrop for her ever-growing collection
of colorful glassware. After seeing a similar
arrangement at the Madonna Inn in
San Luis Obispo, California, Elsie chose to
organize her assortment in an ombré
pattern. Patience is key: "I've collected
these slowly over time," she says.
"I'm not ready for the hunt to be over!"



Get the Look

CREATE YOUR CANVAS

Elsie painted her entire 1970s home (interior and exterior) in Sherwin-Williams Marshmallow. "Going with all white is the easiest and most budget-friendly option for modernizing a space," she says. An eggshell finish is simple to wipe clean and durable enough for frequently touched spots, like hutch doors.

MIX AND MATCH

Elsie got most of her collection from flea markets and thrift stores. Pink pieces were the hardest to find, so she sought out new items at HomeGoods, Target, and Anthropologie.

DIG INTO THE DETAILS

While Elsie's drinkware may catch the eye first, a brass chandelier and brass hardware give the room added glam. Natural wood chairs keep the setup from feeling stark.

DON'T DIVVY IT UP

Displaying a full collection—whether it's colored glass or ticket stubs—is impactful. Instead of sprinkling your treasures throughout your home, group them on a shelf, in a frame, or even in a jar.

\$499; lucentlightshop.com.
Rialto Glassware, \$52 for 2;
infavorof.com. Docksta Table,
\$179; ikea-usa.com. Brushed
Brass Round Handle, from
\$11; cb2.com. Mesa Round
Rug, \$278 (6 ft.); rugs.com.
Poly & Bark Weave Chair in
Natural, \$135; bedbathand
beyond.com for similar.



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Quick Ideas

FETA CREAMED SPINACH

Heat 2 Tbsp. olive oil in a large skillet over medium. Add 3/4 cup chopped onion and 3 chopped cloves garlic; cook for 5 minutes. Add 3 (10 oz.) pkg. frozen chopped spinach (thawed and squeezed dry), 1½ cups heavy cream, and 1 oz. cream cheese. Cook until slightly thickened, 4 minutes. Add 4 oz. feta, 2 Tbsp. chopped dill, 3/4 tsp. kosher salt, and ½ tsp. nutmeg.

SAVORY BREAD PUDDING

Whisk 6 eggs, 4 cups milk, 1 Tbsp. Dijon, and ½ tsp. kosher salt in a 13-by-9-in. baking dish. Cook 2 oz. chopped pancetta in a skillet until crispy. Add 10 oz. frozen chopped spinach (thawed and squeezed dry); heat through. Toss spinach mixture, 10 cups cubed crusty bread, and 8 oz. shredded Gruyère in liquid in baking dish. Bake at 375°F for 50 minutes. Top with chives.

LAMB MEATBALLS

Mix 1 lb. ground lamb, 1 egg, 1 cup frozen chopped spinach (thawed and squeezed dry), ½ cup grated pecorino, ⅓ cup each bread crumbs and milk, 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh mint, 1½ tsp. kosher salt, ½ tsp. cumin, and ¼ tsp. cinnamon. Shape into 1-in. meatballs. Bake on a greased baking sheet at 375°F for 15 minutes.

By Jenna Helwig Recipes by Marianne Williams

Photograph by Caitlin Bensel

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Real milk with no lactose. No artificial growth hormones.* That's our Farmer's Pledge. Lactaia actaid ©McNeil Nutritionals, LLC 2021 'No significant difference has been shown between milk derived from rbST-treated and non-rbST-treated cows. Lactaid. Whole Milk



100% real milk, no lactose.



Get that springtime glow with these shimmery steals that are easy to wear and light on the wallet.

BY FLAVIA NUNEZ

34 **REAL SIMPLE** MAY 2021 Photographs by Brian Henn



- **3 SUNGLASSES** Don't let the sun go down on you...without a pair of timeless, scratchproof shades in your bag. **TO BUY:** The Jane Sunglasses, \$40; priverevaux.com.
- **4 EARRINGS** Mixed metals shouldn't be intimidating. Geometric danglers bring a touch of intricacy to a simple outfit. **TO BUY:** Beckett Earrings, \$36; baublebar.com.
- **5 SUN HAT** Reminder: SPF works even better under a stylish widebrim hat. **TO BUY:** Straw Floppy with Chain Hat, \$39; guess.com.
- 6 NECKLACE On its own or layered with other necklaces, you'll never want to take off this chunky chain.
 TO BUY: Paperclip Style Gold
 Necklace, \$39; victoriaemerson.com.
- 7 **SLIDES** Like disco balls for your feet, these rhinestone sandals give your beach day—or just the morning dog walk—a serious glow-up. **TO BUY:** Gianni Bini Fyffer Slides, \$50; dillards.com.
- 8 TOTE The preppy mainstay gets a dose of pizzazz with rose-gold straps and a glittery monogram.
 TO BUY: Natural Medium Metallic Open Top Canvas Tote Bag, \$36; landsend.com.
- 9 BELT Brighten a monochromatic outfit with a decorative and functional coppery chain belt. TO BUY: Metallic Link Belt, \$36; zara.com.
- 10 SCARF If there's a nip in the air, try some sparkle on your shoulders with this pewter-toned scarf.TO BUY: Metallic Pleated Scarf, \$38; vincecamuto.com.
- **11 HOOPS** The snakeskin design makes these hoops playful and eyecatching. **TO BUY:** 1" Python Leather Hoops, \$33; avmaxnyc.com.
- **12 SANDALS** Your new go-to summer shoe looks chic—and costs less than flip-flops. **TO BUY:** Two Band Slide Sandals, \$13; rainbowshops.com.



MY SIMPLE REALIZATION

"I Can Find New Uses for Old Pursuits"

After spending her childhood performing in stressful singing competitions, ASHA LEMMIE quit cold turkey. Years later, she embraced songs as pure comfort.

I WAS 2 WHEN I started singing. Broadway musicals, butchered operas, jubilant Disney songs. I had inherited a talent my mother had not, and she ensured it would be fastidiously nurtured. I was enrolled in voice, piano, and violin lessons, and later, in competitions. From the age of 5, I measured my talent against others' for the amusement of a crowd. Sternfaced judges, heavy red velvet curtains, an X-marks-the-spot in white masking tape on the stage. I was good enough to win often but never often enough, as far as I was concerned.

If I placed second in a competition, I'd ban the failing piece from my repertoire—for both playing and listening. I've walked out of malls because I heard some elevator-music rendition of a song I thought I'd botched. Through all

those years of singing and playing, my passion was tied to the need for control. But the reality was that music had more control over me than I had over it.

After college, and 16 years of competing, I stopped cold turkey. I could have kept practicing for fun, but I didn't do that either. Instead I sank into a depression. No one was looking at me anymore. I was invisible as a young woman living alone in New York City. But the sense that no one was looking at me and that I was surrounded by thousands of more talented people was, oddly enough, just what I needed to feel free.

As the anxiety started to lift, I remembered the beginning of it all: being a child who fell in love with music and sought it out in the most unlikely of places. In the sound of rain on the roof, there was an arpeggio. In the hum of the refrigerator and the buzzing of the coffee maker, there were hints of a minor chord. In the moments of my life that were the darkest and most fearful, there was, in the back of my mind like an old friend, always a song—an Ave Maria, a Holy Mother, full of grace.

I welcomed that friend back in. I became OK with the occasional karaoke night. I could play simply because I wanted to—because it was Thursday, because the greatest betrayal to a loyal instrument is to let it lie silent. Decades later, I have rediscovered the wisdom of my 4-year-old self, who belted out a Broadway tune: The sun'll come out tomorrow.

ASHA LEMMIE IS THE NEW YORK TIMES
BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF FIFTY WORDS
FOR RAIN.

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Savory Sesame Chicken and Vegetables

Crave-worthy comfort food

370 calories

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high protein

SAVORY
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YOU RULE

GUIDES



SIMPLE TWIST

Blend It Better

Hearing the blender sputter, stall, and grind to a halt is no way to start your day—let alone make a smoothie. For the best mixture, pour in liquids first to give the blades freedom to spin, says Jenna Helwig, food director at REAL SIMPLE and author of *Smoothie-licious*. Next, layer in greens like kale or spinach, which "helps them break down so your smoothie doesn't eat like a salad," she says. Top the greens with nut butters and fresh fruits and vegetables, then finish with anything frozen. "You want to add icy stuff last so the less dense ingredients can blend first," she says. "That will help keep your blender running more smoothly and provide a tastier drink." —*Brandi Broxson*

THINGS COOKS KNOW

Ingredient Swap Sheet

If you don't have something handy, get creative. The flavor may not be exactly the same, but it'll be close enough. Bonus points for experimentation.

BY JENNA HELWIG

SUBSTITUTIONS

Unless otherwise noted, these are one-to-one swaps.



Fish sauce

Soy sauce Tamari

Sherry vinegar

Red wine vinegar White wine vinegar Apple cider vinegar

Maple syrup

Honey Agave nectar

Canned chickpeas

Canned cannellini beans

Panko

Dry bread crumbs

Farro

Wheatberries Barley Brown rice

Dried cherries

Dried cranberries Raisins

Frozen kale

Frozen spinach

Ground chicken

Ground turkey

Ground lamb

Ground beef

Pancetta

Bacon

Almond butter

Peanut butter
Sunflower seed butter



Almonds

Walnuts Pecans

Broccoli

Cauliflower

1 tablespoon chopped fresh herbs

1 teaspoon dried herbs



Apples

Firm pears

Shallots

Onions

Chives

Scallion greens

1 clove garlic

1/8 teaspoon garlic powder

Shredded Gruyère

Shredded Cheddar Shredded Monterey Jack

Grated Grana Padano

Grated Parmesan

Greek yogurt

Sour cream Crème fraîche

Ricotta

Drained cottage cheese

Make Your Own

All is not lost if you're midrecipe and realize you're out of an ingredient.

1 CUP BUTTERMILK

Whisk 1 tablespoon white vinegar or 1 tablespoon lemon juice with enough milk to make 1 cup. Let sit for 10 minutes.

1 EGG

Whisk 1 tablespoon ground flaxseed and 3 tablespoons water. Let sit for 15 to 20 minutes. This works especially well in baking.

1 CUP CORN SYRUP

Whisk 11/4 cups granulated sugar and 1/3 cup hot water.

1 CUP BROWN SUGAR

Mix 1 cup granulated sugar and ¹/₄ cup molasses.

1 CUP CAKE FLOUR

Whisk 1 cup (minus 2 tablespoons) all-purpose flour and 2 tablespoons cornstarch.

1 TEASPOON BAKING POWDER

Combine 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar and 1/4 teaspoon baking soda.

1 CUP BEEF OR CHICKEN BROTH

Stir 1 cup (minus 1 tablespoon) water and 1 tablespoon soy sauce.

1/4 CUP WHITE WINE

Combine 1/4 cup water or chicken broth with 1 teaspoon vinegar or 2 teaspoons lemon juice.



— TALK TO YOUR ECZEMA SPECIALIST AND VISIT DUPIXENT.COM OR CALL 1-844-DUPIXENT (1-844-387-4936) —

INDICATION

DUPIXENT is a prescription medicine used to treat people aged 6 years and older with moderate-to-severe atopic dermatitis (eczema) that is not well controlled with prescription therapies used on the skin (topical), DUPIXENT can be used with or without topical corticosteroids. It is not known if DUPIXENT is safe and effective in children with atopic dermatitis under Tell your healthcare provider about 6 years of age.

Do not use if you are allergic to dupilumab or to any of the ingredients in DUPIXENT®.

Before using DUPIXENT, tell your healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including if you: have eye problems; have a parasitic (helminth) infection; are scheduled to receive any vaccinations. You should not receive a "live vaccine" if you are talking to your healthcare provider. have any side effect that bothers Please see Brief Summary on next page. treated with DUPIXENT; are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known whether DUPIXENT will medicine or other asthma medicine of DUPIXENT. Call your doctor for harm your unborn baby. There is to come back. a pregnancy exposure registry for DUPIXENT can cause serious side are encouraged to report negative Pharmaceuticals, Inc. women who take DUPIXENT during effects, including:

about the health of you and your including a severe reaction known or call 1-800-FDA-1088. baby. Your healthcare provider can **as anaphylaxis.** Stop using DUPIXENT Use DUPIXENT exactly as prescribed. enroll you or you may enroll yourself. and tell your healthcare provider or To get more information about the get emergency help right away if you registry call 1-877-311-8972 or go to get any of the following symptoms: https://mothertobaby.org/ongoing-breathingproblems, fever, general ill or plan to breastfeed. It is not known of the face, mouth and tongue, hives, whether DUPIXENT passes into your itching, fainting, dizziness, feeling breast milk.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION prescription and over-the-counter provider if you have any new or supplements.

> if you are taking oral, topical or inhaled patients with atopic dermatitis corticosteroid medicines or if you have include injection site reactions, eye atopic dermatitis and asthma and use and eyelid inflammation, including an asthma medicine. **Do not** change redness, swelling, and itching, and cold or stop your corticosteroid medicine sores in your mouth or on your lips. or other asthma medicine without Tell your healthcare provider if you This may cause other symptoms that you or that does not go away. These were controlled by the corticosteroid are not all the possible side effects SANOFI GENZYME 5

pregnancy to collect information Allergic reactions (hypersensitivity), the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, joint pain, or skin rash.

eye pain or changes in vision.

Especially tell your healthcare provider The most common side effects in

medical advice about side effects. You © 2020 Sanofi and Regeneron side effects of prescription drugs to All Rights Reserved. DUP.20.11.0033

Your healthcare provider will tell you how much DUPIXENT to inject and how often to inject it. DUPIXENT is or who cannot use topical therapies. study/dupixent/; are breastfeeding feeling, swollen lymph nodes, swelling an injection given under the skin (subcutaneous injection). If your healthcare provider decides that lightheaded (low blood pressure), you or a caregiver can give DUPIXENT injections, you or your caregiver all the medicines you take, including Eye problems. Tell your healthcare should receive training on the right way to prepare and inject DUPIXENT. medicines, vitamins and herbal worsening eye problems, including Do not try to inject DUPIXENT until you have been shown the right way by your healthcare provider. In children 12 years of age and older, it is recommended that DUPIXENT be administered by or under supervision of an adult. In children younger than 12 years of age, DUPIXENT should be given by a caregiver.

Brief Summary of Important Patient Information about DUPIXENT® (dupilumab) Rx Only (DU-pix'-ent)

injection, for subcutaneous use

What is DUPIXENT?

- DUPIXENT is a prescription medicine used:
- to treat people aged 6 years and older with moderate-to-severe atopic dermatitis (eczema) that is not well controlled with prescription therapies used on the skin (topical), or who cannot use topical therapies. DUPIXENT can be used with or without topical corticosteroids.
- DUPIXENT works by blocking two proteins that contribute to a type of inflammation that plays a major role in atopic dermatitis.
- It is not known if DUPIXENT is safe and effective in children with atopic dermatitis under 6 years of age.

Who should not use DUPIXENT?

Do not use DUPIXENT if you are allergic to dupilumab or to any of the ingredients in DUPIXENT. See the end of this summary of information for a complete list of ingredients in DUPIXENT.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before using DUPIXENT? Before using DUPIXENT, tell your healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including if you:

- · have eye problems
- have a parasitic (helminth) infection
- are scheduled to receive any vaccinations. You should not receive a "live vaccine" if you are treated with DUPIXENT.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known whether DUPIXENT will harm your unborn baby.
 - Pregnancy Exposure Registry. There is a pregnancy exposure registry for women who take DUPIXENT during pregnancy. The purpose of this registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Your healthcare provider can enroll you in this registry. You may also enroll yourself or get more information about the registry by calling 1 877 311-8972 or going to https://mothertobaby.org/ongoing-study/dupixent/.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known whether DUPIXENT passes into your breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all of the medicines you take including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Especially tell your healthcare provider if you:

- are taking oral, topical, or inhaled corticosteroid medicines
- have atopic dermatitis and asthma and use an asthma medicine

Do not change or stop your corticosteroid medicine or other asthma medicine without talking to your healthcare provider. This may cause other symptoms that were controlled by the corticosteroid medicine or other asthma medicine to come back.

How should I use DUPIXENT?

- See the detailed "Instructions for Use" that comes with DUPIXENT for information on how to prepare and inject DUPIXENT and how to properly store and throw away (dispose of) used DUPIXENT pre-filled syringes and pre-filled pens.
- Use DUPIXENT exactly as prescribed by your healthcare provider.
- Your healthcare provider will tell you how much DUPIXENT to inject and how often to inject it.
- DUPIXENT comes as a single-dose pre-filled syringe with needle shield or as a pre-filled pen.
- DUPIXENT is given as an injection under the skin (subcutaneous injection).
- If your healthcare provider decides that you or a caregiver can give the injections of DUPIXENT, you or your caregiver should receive training on the right way to prepare and inject DUPIXENT. **Do not** try to inject DUPIXENT until you have been shown the right way by your healthcare provider. In children 12 years of age and older, it is recommended that DUPIXENT be administered by or under supervision of an adult. In children younger than 12 years of age, DUPIXENT should be given by a caregiver.

- If your dose schedule is every other week and you miss a dose of DUPIXENT: Give the DUPIXENT injection within 7 days from the missed dose, then continue with your original schedule. If the missed dose is not given within 7 days, wait until the next scheduled dose to give your DUPIXENT injection.
- If your dose schedule is every 4 weeks and you miss a dose of DUPIXENT: Give the DUPIXENT injection within 7 days from the missed dose, then continue with your original schedule. If the missed dose is not given within 7 days, start a new every 4 week dose schedule from the time you remember to take your DUPIXENT injection.
- If you inject more DUPIXENT than prescribed, call your healthcare provider right away.
- Your healthcare provider may prescribe other medicines to use with DUPIXENT.
 Use the other prescribed medicines exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to.

What are the possible side effects of DUPIXENT? DUPIXENT can cause serious side effects, including:

- Allergic reactions (hypersensitivity), including a severe reaction known as anaphylaxis. Stop using DUPIXENT and tell your healthcare provider or get emergency help right away if you get any of the following symptoms: breathing problems, fever, general ill feeling, swollen lymph nodes, swelling of the face, mouth and tongue, hives, itching, fainting, dizziness, feeling lightheaded (low blood pressure), joint pain, or skin rash.
- Eye problems. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new or worsening eye problems, including eye pain or changes in vision.

The most common side effects of DUPIXENT in patients with atopic dermatitis include: injection site reactions, eye and eyelid inflammation, including redness, swelling and itching, and cold sores in your mouth or on your lips. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all of the possible side effects of DUPIXENT. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

General information about the safe and effective use of DUPIXENT.

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information leaflet. Do not use DUPIXENT for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give DUPIXENT to other people, even if they have the same symptoms that you have. It may harm them.

This is a brief summary of the most important information about DUPIXENT for this use. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider for more information about DUPIXENT that is written for healthcare professionals.

For more information about DUPIXENT, go to www.DUPIXENT.com or call 1-844-DUPIXENT (1-844-387-4936)

What are the ingredients in DUPIXENT?

Active ingredient: dupilumab

Inactive ingredients: L-arginine hydrochloride, L-histidine, polysorbate 80, sodium acetate, sucrose, and water for injection

Manufactured by: Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Tarrytown, NY 10591 U.S. License # 1760; Marketed by sanofi-aventis U.S. LLC, (Bridgewater, NJ 08807) and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Tarrytown, NY 10591) DUPIXENT® is a registered trademark of Sanofi Biotechnology / ©2020 Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. / sanofi-aventis U.S. LLC. All rights reserved. Issue Date: June 2020



DAY ONE

Start by placing the oven racks in the bathtub (line the tub with an old bath towel to prevent scratching). Fill with hot water, drop in four to six dryer sheets, and add two or three squirts of dish soap. Let the racks soak for a few hours or, ideally, overnight. Meanwhile, open the door to the cool oven; spread a towel on the floor to catch spills as you clean. Remove food bits from the bottom of the oven with a cloth or handheld vac. Lay a damp, soapy microfiber cloth on the door's glass panel for at least 10 minutes to break down grease. With a spray bottle, lightly spritz the cavity with water, avoiding any heating elements, to soften hardened spills. Wait 15 to 20 minutes, then make a paste with a half cup of baking soda and three tablespoons of water. Wearing gloves, spread the paste on the inner walls (skipping vents or openings). Let it sit for 12 hours or overnight.

THE NEXT DAY

Rinse your racks. Remove stubborn gunk with a stiff brush or scouring pad, douse the racks in clean water, and let them dry. Give your tub a final rinse too. Return to your oven. Rub the paste (which may have dried into a powder) into the surface with a microfiber cloth, then wipe it off. Bust out a nonscratch scouring pad or cleaning pumice for interior caked-on grime, and use the abrasive side of a dish sponge on the door's glass. Break down any leftover buildup by spraying the interior and door with a vinegar-based cleaner and wiping. Finally, spray with water and wipe with a clean cloth. The residue might dry into a white cast, so you may need to spray with water and wipe a few times to ensure it's all gone. Return the racks.

TRY THE SELF-CLEAN CYCLE

If you have a self-cleaning oven and never use that feature, we don't blame you. The oven gets blazing hot (over 800 degrees Fahrenheit!) and can smell funky. To try it, sweep out crumbs, remove the racks, and empty the warmer drawer. Open windows, because the room will get warm and smelly. Once your oven is cool, wipe the inside with a damp cloth.

NEW USES FOR OLD THINGS

Keep a baking sheet on the lower rack to catch spills. (Don't worry! Your pies and casseroles will still cook evenly.)

...With These



SCOURING PAD

Scotch-Brite's Non-Scratch Scour Pad (\$5 for 4; target.com) erases gunk.



SPRAY BOTTLE

Try this Refillable Glass Spray Bottle (\$12; fullcirclehome.com) to rinse off the oven interior.



CLEANING PUMICE

Use the Pumie Scouring
Stick (\$2; amazon.com)
to remove buildup
from oven walls. Wet it first
to prevent scratching.



DRYER SHEETS

Mrs. Meyer's Dryer Sheets (\$9; mrsmeyers.com) are surprisingly effective at lifting gunk from racks.



HEAVY-DUTY BRUSH

If you prefer something with a handle, go for the Smart Scrub All Purpose Brush (\$7; casabella.com).

OUR EXPERTS

ANGELA BELL AND GEORGIA DIXON,

GROVE GUIDES AT THE HOME- AND PERSONAL-CARE BRAND GROVE COLLABORATIVE

AMELIA HENSLEY, DIRECTOR OF COOKING SYSTEMS AT GE APPLIANCES MELISSA MAKER, FOUNDER OF THE CLEANING COMPANY CLEAN MY SPACE



ROAD TEST

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Whether they hydrate or highlight, these six multitasking winners (out of 20 tested) offer much more than just excellent sun protection.

BY ANNEKE KNOT



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Get ready for more real estate in your medicine cabinet. This tube takes the place of a serum, oil, moisturizer, and physical SPF—and it will make all your dewy-skin dreams come true. Two pumps of the cream perfects (yet doesn't hide) skin. You'll actually want to reapply.

TO BUY: \$34; saiehello.com.



BEST LIP BALM

EOS The Guardian 100% Natural

Sunscreen Lip Balm

Packed with cushiony shea butter, this zinc oxide balm will take your pout from pitiful to plush.

TO BUY: \$3; at Target.



BEST FOR DISCOLORATION

SkinCeuticals Daily Brightening UV Defense Sunscreen SPF 30

This sheer formula brightens skin instantly and helps fade existing marks and ward off new ones. **TO BUY:** \$54; skinceuticals.com.



BEST FOR DARK SKIN

Melé No Shade Sunscreen Oil SPF 30

Too often, white skin is the default when creating sunscreens. Not so with this nongreasy oil, made with input by BIPOC derms. It protects without leaving streaks.

TO BUY: \$20; target.com.



BEST TOUCH-UP

Supergoop Resetting 100% Mineral Powder SPF 35

Keep this brush handy for easy reapplication, or to spot-treat oil-prone zones (nose!). When you run out, just twist in a refill. **TO BUY:** \$30; supergoop.com.



BEST FOR BODY

Coppertone Glow Lightweight Body Spray SPF 50

Confidence in a can, this fast-drying, shimmering spray delivers a sophisticated sheen. Coat it on liberally for prime protection.

TO BUY: \$9; cvs.com.





REAL SIMPLE MAY 2021 Photograph by Mei Tao

PREP AND PRIME

A great place to start a no-heat style: in the shower, when your hair is dripping wet, says celebrity hairstylist Bridget Brager. Wet hair is more easily manipulated, and clean hair holds waves longer. After you shampoo, apply conditioner, then smooth snarls with a wide-tooth comb, such as the Hair Edit Detangling Shower Comb (\$5; ulta .com). To minimize breakage, comb the ends first, inching up your strands until you're starting from the roots, Brager says. Grab a microfiber towel or an old cotton T-shirt both are gentler than a terry cloth towel and will absorb more moisture. Scrunch hair instead of rubbing. Spritz on a heat protectant, like Herbal Essences Argan Oil & Aloe Mist (\$6; at drugstores), then roughly blow-dry. If you have fine hair, boost volume by flipping strands back and forth at the roots while drying. If you have a thick, curly texture, Brager suggests not touching your hair too much, so you can reduce flyaways.







DO THE TWIST

When your hair is about 75 percent dry, part it down the middle and separate it into two sections, as if you were making pigtails. Reach for a bathrobe belt. a silk scarf, or even a tube sock, though a belt or scarf works better on longer hair. The thicker the fabric, the looser the waves. Drape the belt or scarf over your head and secure with a clip (see step A, left). Try Harry Josh Pro Tools Pro Makeup & Wave Setting Clips (\$18 for 6; dermstore.com). Starting on one side, wrap about one-inch sections of hair smaller for tighter waves, larger for looser ones around the fabric (step B). Hold on to wrapped pieces while you grab the next one, working your way down your head (step C). Don't stress if it's a little messy and loose—haphazardness will result in perfectly imperfect waves. Once all your hair on that side is wrapped, secure ends with a scrunchie, then repeat on the other side. Kitsch Satin Sleep Scrunchies (\$8 for 5; mykitsch.com) are soft on delicate ends and absorb moisture.

3

TOUSLE IT OUT

Sleep with the twists overnight and undo them in the morning when hair is dry. To speed up the process, you can blow-dry your hair with a diffuser while it's still wrapped, Brager says. If your hair doesn't hold a curl well, the longer the twists are in, the better. Run your fingers through strands to break up the pieces—this will give you a more lived-in texture, instead of the prom night curls you may see immediately upon undoing. If the spirals are still too tight, loosen them with a boarbristle brush. Let any damp pieces air-dry. For grit and hold, add a shot of texturizer, like Sachajuan Ocean Mist (\$31; amazon.com).



HEALTHY AT HOME

Minimize the Midlife Pill Pileup

Adulthood has ushered in yet another thing that cries out for organization: the pills we pop for our health.

BY DANA WOOD

at My Last Checkup, my primary care physician declared me to be in peak health. Yes, I could be more diligent about my vitamin D, but overall, this 58-year-old tennis addict's lab results were pretty stellar—no problems with sugar, cholesterol, or blood pressure.

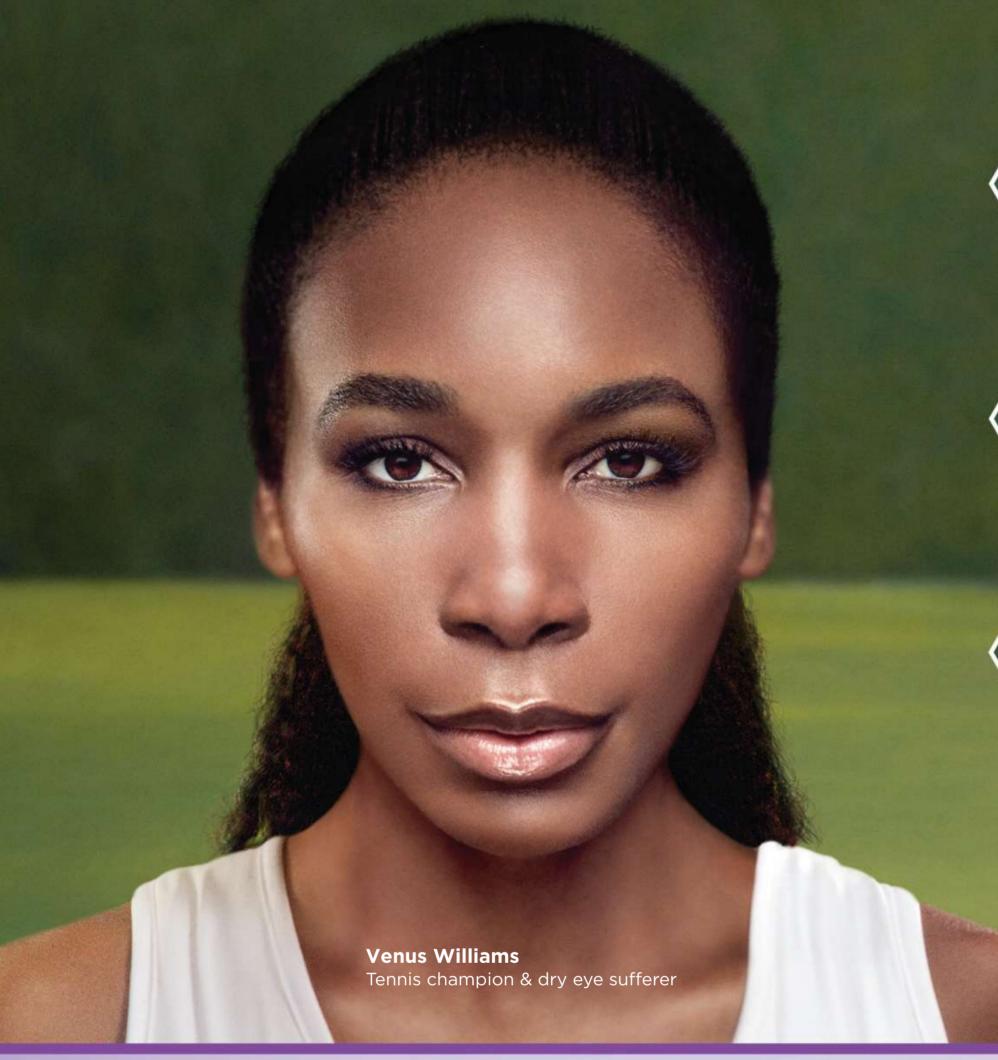
But if I'm so hale and hearty, why is the baggie of meds I bring to my doctor getting bigger each year? I feel like I'm swallowing a daily fistful of drugs and supplements, and it's making me uncomfortable.

There's levothyroxine for my sluggish thyroid, prescription eye drops to ward off glaucoma, allergy meds for my itchy eyes and sniffling, and a twopronged hormone replacement therapy protocol (progesterone pills and estrogen-testosterone cream). On the over-the-counter front, I gobble melatonin, Tylenol PM, and Olly Sleep gummies to help me drift off at night, plus anxiety fixes for the 3 a.m. wakeups: the amino acid GABA, the herb ashwagandha, and a wannabe-Xanax supplement called Pirate Chill that I pop despite the label's cartoonish skull and crossbones.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 23.5 percent of Americans ages 40 to 79 take five or more prescription drugs over a 30-day period. As we approach midlife, the ailments can add up. Menopause can bring a host of symptoms, from insomnia to migraines, says Richard Baron, MD, president and CEO of the American Board of Internal Medicine. "Given our faith in pills, we think, 'Maybe if I take this, I'll feel better."

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Just ask Heather Stahl, 49, who's taking 11 prescription medications—including three for anxiety alone. That's a massive uptick from the two meds she was on five years ago: "Perimenopause brought on sleeplessness, migraines, and more anxiety."

My friend Julia is on two antidepressants, Strattera for ADHD, and birth control pills to regulate her hormones. Plus, she has a drawerful of vitamins and supplements. "I'm 50, so I grew up in the age of microwave popcorn—the age of quick fixes," Julia says. "Why suffer?"

Nicole Rochester, MD, founder of the health advocacy company Your GPS Doc, says to be prepared to speak up for yourself when talking with your provider. "The instinct for many physicians is to prescribe," she says. "Most doctors have very little time to explore the underlying cause of chronic health problems like daily headaches. The typical response is to pull out the prescription pad."

I decided that my annual appointment was the perfect opportunity for a top-down medication assessment. I discovered that a close partnership with your doctor and some concrete steps can streamline your medicine cabinet.

Write It Down

Keep at least a two-week log of your prescription and OTC meds to review with your doctor, recommends Joanne Doyle Petrongolo, a pharmacist for Massachusetts General Hospital's Integrated Care Management Program. List everything you're taking, along with dosages.

One doctor asks patients to bring in every pill so he can scrutinize them. "I've had people come in with shopping bags."

If you don't have insurance or need to find a provider to review your meds, the virtual service JustAnswer connects you to a pharmacist for a monthly fee (from \$46). And Walgreens offers the free Pharmacy Chat, which lets you print your conversation.

Cut Sneaky Duplications

Work with your doctor or pharmacist to identify similar meds and supplements. For example, do you need a daily allergy tablet *and* a prescription nasal spray? Turns out I didn't, once I was safely past high-pollen season. We also swapped out my self-prescribed anxiety busters (including, *arrr*, my Pirate Chill) for low-dose Xanax. Given that the FDA doesn't regulate supplements the same way it regulates prescription medication, my doc opted for the drug with the proven track record.

One big trap to avoid, Baron says, is taking both the brand-name and generic versions of the same drug, which can happen all too easily when you switch doctors or pharmacies. He asks patients to bring in every pill so he and his team can scrutinize them. "I've had people come in with shopping bags."

Take as Prescribed

Be disciplined about your meds. As many as 50 percent of patients don't take their drugs at the right time, in the right way, or with the right frequency. That can worsen your condi-

tion, misleading doctors into thinking you need more treatments. The solution can be as simple as setting a phone alert. For complicated regimens, your pharmacy or certain apps may be able to help. For example, CVS Pharmacy's ScriptPath system reviews patients' prescriptions and provides a schedule for taking them, says Ryan Rumbarger, senior vice president of retail store operations for CVS Pharmacy. The app Medisafe (free; iOS and Android) reminds you to take your meds, scans for drug interactions, and allows you to manage family members' medications as well.

Do the Right (No-Pill) Stuff

Popping a pill is sometimes unavoidable. But there's so much we can do to improve our health before we get to that stage. Anxiety, for example, affects approximately 40 percent of women. Lifestyle shifts, like starting a meditation practice, might not eliminate the need for meds but could reduce your stress and make you more mindful of your emotional state.

Another good move: getting more physical activity, a proven mood booster that's also associated with a lower risk of the major metabolic disorders that tend to appear by midlife. "Exercise can favorably impact high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease," Baron says. "There are lots of people who could wind up not needing a medication if they exercise regularly."



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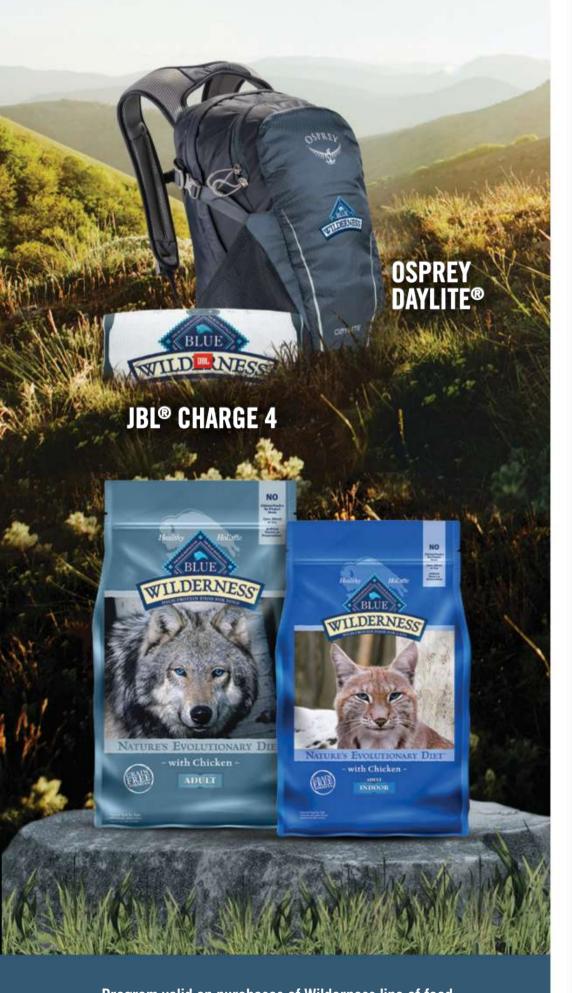


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PETS

The Inside-Outside Dilemma

Your cat or dog doesn't have to be a total shut-in. Here's how to let your pet take a walk on the wild side.

BY JUNO DEMELO

Weigh the Options

Most vets now say the risks of letting cats outdoors can trump the benefits. Your kitty could be attacked by another (possibly rabid) animal or wander too far and get lost. And cats may cause trouble for other creatures: Free-ranging cats kill up to 4 billion birds per year, a study in the journal Nature Communications estimated.

Bring the Outdoors In

To fulfill your cat's natural need to hunt and problemsolve, try hiding kibble throughout the house or using a puzzle feeder. Offer toys that mimic mice or birds, and provide a scratching post and observing perch. You could also try a "catio," a secured enclosure that fits in a window, on your deck, or in your backyard. Habitat Haven sells both ready-made and custom catio kits.

Are Doggy Doors OK?

Because cats can get out of a backyard—and predators can get in—most vets don't recommend letting cats use doggy doors. But they can be good for homealone pups who need frequent potty breaks. Make sure your yard has a high fence (some dogs can leap up to six feet), and consider installing a smart door that's triggered by a sensor in your dog's collar or microchip (all dogs and cats should be microchipped). That ensures it opens only for your dog and not, say, a raccoon.

OUR EXPERTS

BRUCE KORNREICH, DVM, PHD, DIRECTOR OF THE CORNELL FELINE HEALTH CENTER AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY'S COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

MICHELLE MEYER, DVM, VETERINARIAN AT SERENITY ANIMAL HOSPITAL IN STERLING HEIGHTS, MICHIGAN, AND PRESIDENT-ELECT OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF FELINE PRACTITIONERS

IRENE FUJISHIMA NAKAOKA, DVM, VETERINARIAN AT COUNTRY OAKS PET HOSPITAL IN SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, AND FELINE SPECIALIST AT THE AMERICAN BOARD OF VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS



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MONEY

I (Finally!) Tracked Down My Old 401(k)s

It's 2021. Do you know where your retirement accounts are? Let this be the year you find those funds.

BY RORY EVANS

when putting winter jackets in deep storage for the season, I'm that person who doesn't bother to clean out the pockets. I just want the cold weather over and done with and out of my sight completely. Which is why, come fall, I experience a bonanza of found money: a handful of singles here in my puffer, a few rumply 5s and 10s there in my anorak, and—ka-ching—usually a crisp 20 (or two!) in the Napoleon pocket of my wool coat.

For too long, my retirement planning resembled my off-season coat storage. In my 20s and 30s, as I played a busy game of career hopscotch not

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entirely uncommon in my field, I'd dutifully plunk a few thousand into my employer-sponsored 401(k) plans. And every few years, when I got a new job, I'd put the old job in deep storage without getting the money out of the pockets. Unlike coats, though, which come out again half a year later, my various 401(k)s just sat there for *decaaades*.

Some of the plans predated online banking, and locating the account numbers always seemed like such a high hurdle. Phone calls would be involved, as well as endless hold times listening to synthesized light rock. But then I did the quick calculus: If I withstood a few hours of frustration now and tracked down the old funds, I could get all my assets into a retirement account at my bank, and let that compound interest start to rack up—in the same spot, on the same statement, behind the same password!

As it happens, I am hardly the only person to leave money in various old accounts. In the past decade, 25 million Americans—43 percent of Gen Xers and 35 percent of millennials—have lost access to retirement accounts by changing jobs. "It's like leaving your money with someone you're divorced from," says Zaneilia Harris, a certified financial planner and the president of Harris and Harris Wealth

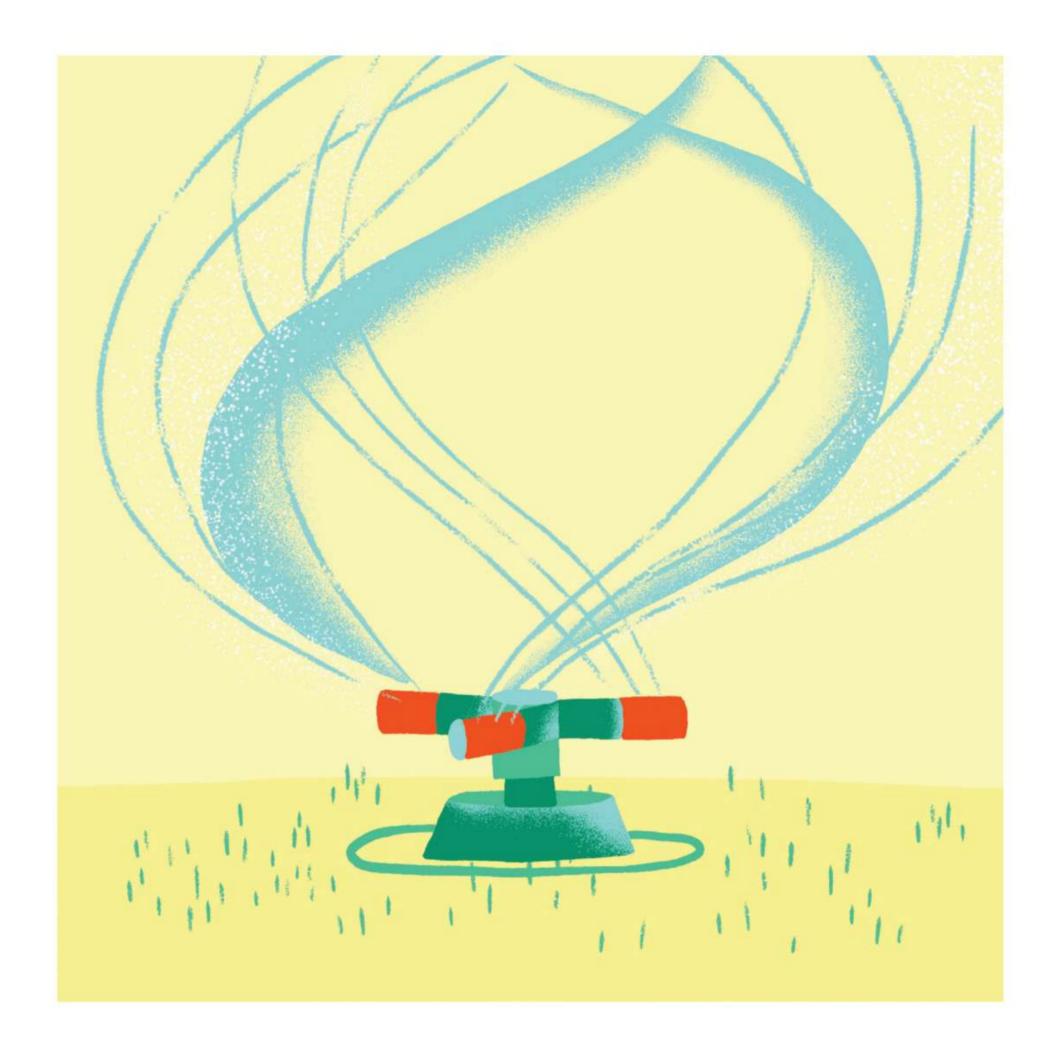
Management. Granted, with a 401(k), the money is still yours, and the feefree total amount still gains interest. But you don't have easy access to it, and you're not adding to its total.

If I was being lazy by not hunting down the money, at least I wasn't being totally irresponsible. Had I taken out the money as soon as I left the old job and spent it, or simply put it in a savings account, I would have been hit with a huge tax penalty. To avoid owing money to Uncle Sucker, you have three options: "Leave the funds in the account, move them to the 401(k) at your new job, or roll them into an IRA at another financial institution," Harris says. Trust meunless you speak fluent investmentese, you want a financial adviser for this chore. Since I was moving all the funds into an IRA at my longtime bank, I got help from my financial adviser there, whose name is Vinita. But you can also hire an independent (and unbiased) adviser and pay an hourly rate, a flat fee, an asset-based fee, or a retainer rate, Harris says.

In the past decade, 25 million Americans have lost access to retirement accounts by changing jobs. The process started, as I had feared, with picking up the phone—calling the HR departments at old jobs and finding out which firms had my money. (You can also check the National Registry of Unclaimed Retirement Benefits at unclaimedretirement benefits.com.)

Then the fun kicked in: After conferencing in Vinita, I called the various firms (hello, Fidelity and T. Rowe Price!), armed and ready to verify my identity and request a check. Whenever the service reps asked me something I didn't know, Vinita stepped in and did the translating. The accountclosing checks were made payable to the mutual fund I'd deposit them into, care of me. When I expressed my disbelief that this process actually involved snail mail and paper checks (isn't Elon Musk about to put a tourist on the moon?) and my fear that porch pirates would abscond with my retirement, Vinita pushed to get the checks sent with tracking numbers.

One hour on the phone and two business days later, I was in possession of a handful of checks that did indeed add up to almost \$10,000. I then needed to bring that money to the bank to deposit into my IRA. Because I was this far in—and didn't want to take another chance on the mail or pay for overnight shipping—I chose to hand deliver the checks to Vinita. I'll give you exactly one guess as to where I kept them on my way to the bank. In my jacket pocket.



THE POWER OF LESS

WATER

Discover 16 easy ways to lower your consumption.

BY HALLIE LEVINE

MANY OF US HAVE ACCESS TO PLENTY OF FRESH WATER, but that might change within three decades. More than 5.5 billion people worldwide could face water scarcity by 2050, owing largely to global warming, according to a 2018 United Nations World Water Development Report. Half the freshwater basins in the U.S. may not meet our demands for clean water by 2071—a year our children and grandchildren will likely experience. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the average American uses approximately 80 to 100 gallons of water a day. Some of the biggest culprits? Flushing the toilet, bathing, and needlessly running faucets. These quick hacks will dramatically reduce your water usage.

In the Kitchen

uses almost five times as much water as an energy-efficient dishwasher (20 gallons versus 4½). Don't rinse them spotless before loading. "That's your dishwasher's job. Many newer models have powerful sensors that check the progress of your dishes throughout the cycle and adjust the spray accordingly," says Jill Notini, vice president of communications at the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers. If you're washing by hand, simply fill your sink with hot, soapy water, let your dishes soak, and then rinse them, says Ed Osann, director of national water-use efficiency at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

water as possible—just enough to submerge your pasta or veggies. (Bonus: With less water, you retain more flavor.) And instead of rinsing food under cold water to cool it, try tossing it with a few ice cubes in a bowl and then draining it after the ice melts, suggests Jackie Newgent, RDN, a nutritionist in New York City and the author of *The Clean & Simple Diabetes Cookbook*.

RINSE AND DEFROST RIGHTEOUSLY

Place fruits and most veggies (not greens or anything gritty) in a large bowl of water and scrub them with a veggie brush, then rinse. If you need to defrost items like frozen meat quickly, use the microwave.

In the Bathroom

DON'T RUSH TO FLUSH Toilets account for about 30 percent of your home's indoor water consumption, according to the EPA. You can halve that amount by flushing after every other use, says Glenn Gallas, vice president of operations for Mr. Rooter Plumbing, a

national plumbing company. If you're replacing your toilet, consider a two-flush model, which does a light flush (about one gallon) for pee and a complete flush (about 1.6 gallons) for poop. Prices start at around \$200.

toilet leak could waste up to 30 gallons of water a day, Gallas says. Try this easy check: Put a drop of food coloring in your toilet's tank and wait 10 minutes. If the dye shows up in the bowl, you have a leak (oh hello, Encyclopedia Brown!). It can likely be fixed by installing a new toilet flapper, which you can get at a hardware store for under \$10, Gallas says.

models use 2½ gallons of water per minute, according to the EPA. Try one that carries the EPA's WaterSense label, which trims that by about 20 percent. The EPA has tested these products with consumers, to weed out ones with weak sprays and poor spray patterns.

American shower uses about 16 gallons of water, according to the Alliance for Water Efficiency. Turn the water off while you lather up and shave, Osann says, and you'll save about two gallons every minute. A showerhead with an on-off switch (available at hardware stores for about \$30) lets you pause and resume the flow without readjusting the temperature.

BUCKET UP Save another gallon per shower: While you wait for the water to get hot, collect the cooler water in a bucket. "You can use it for pets or plants," Osann says.

DON A SHOWER CAP Speed up your shower by skipping your hair routine. If quarantimes have taught us anything, it's that most hair

DO A HOME WATER PRESSURE TEST

If yours is too high over 60 psi—that means more water than necessary is flooding through your pipes, Gallas says. This is not only wasteful but may cause leaks. Check your pressure at home with a water pressure gauge, which costs around \$10. Simply attach it to a faucet or hose for results within seconds. Anything between 45 and 60 psi is ideal, Gallas says. If it's too high, a plumber can easily adjust it.



Pinch salt, not yourself.

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types can go up to three days without being washed. If you feel greasy, use dry shampoo, says Antoinette Beenders, senior vice president at Aveda.

wash hands handly We're all scrubbing our hands nonstop lately, but if you shut off the faucet while you do that 20-second rub, you'll save at least seven gallons a day. Turn off the water while you brush your teeth to save another eight gallons daily. That adds up to 450 gallons a month—the equivalent of about nine full bathtubs.

In the Yard

GIVE YOUR LAWN A TRIM, NOT A SHAVE

The longer your grass, the less water it needs, says Lisa Stryker, vice president of communications and marketing at the National Association of Landscape Professionals. While two inches is considered the standard length, you can let grass grow more in the hotter months of July and August. Research shows that a height of 2 to 3¾ inches is best for grass health: Shorter than that can weaken grass and promote weed growth. Adjust your mower's cutting height by placing it on a sidewalk or your driveway and using a ruler to measure from the ground to the edge of the cutting blade. If it's under two inches, adjust each wheel to make it higher.

American home uses about 30 percent of its water outdoors, mainly on grass. If you live somewhere that gets occasional rain, you don't need a sprinkler system at all. "Most people don't realize that their lawn only

Compost acts as a sponge to hold water, so your garden will require less.



requires about an inch of water a week, especially if they don't cut it too short," Stryker says. If there are a few dry weeks, your lawn may turn brown temporarily, but it will bounce back, she adds.

INVEST IN SMARTER IRRIGATION

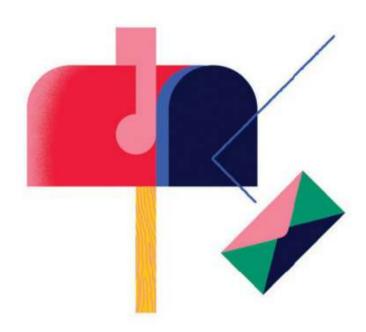
Plants in parched climates may need a sprinkler. Stryker recommends using a system with smart irrigation technology, which monitors weather and soil conditions to automatically adjust the watering schedule. Switching over from your existing system will cost between \$500 and \$1,000.

DON'T CURB YOUR COMPOST Instead of throwing your leftover food down the garbage disposal, put it to good use by composting it for the soil in your garden, advises Starr Brainard, owner of Saltless Sea Urban Farm in Duluth, Minnesota. "Compost provides a diverse and balanced array of nutrients that chemical fertilizer may not offer," she explains. "It also acts as a sponge to hold water, so your garden will require less." It doesn't take much to see results. A 5 percent increase in compost, for example, quadruples soil's water-retaining capacity, according to experts at the University of California Agriculture and National Resources. Most gardeners tend to underdo it—Brainard suggests placing a solid inch or two on top of the soil.

HOLD OFF ON THE HOSE The EPA recommends sweeping driveways, sidewalks, and steps rather than hosing them down. Need to wash your car? Many newer car washes recycle water—call yours to check. ■







Banish Junk Mail Everywhere

Call 888-5-OPT-OUT or go to optoutprescreen.com to stop receiving credit card and insurance offers. If you keep getting junk mail or catalogs, visit dmachoice.org. For \$2, you can opt out of entire categories of mail for 10 years. Also, try the app PaperKarma (\$4 per month, \$25 per year; iOS and Android), which helps you unsubscribe from unwanted mail after you take a photo of it.

IN YOUR EMAIL INBOX

Beyond clicking Unsubscribe, you can "train" your inbox to handle unwanted types of email. In Gmail, click Report Spam. In Outlook, send the message to your junk folder. Subsequent emails from the sender will go to spam automatically, so you can batch delete them. The app Unroll.Me (free; iOS and Android) lets you unsubscribe from mass promotional emails or group them into daily email digests. -Martha Upton

FIND STASHED CASH

Most Americans have about \$100 in unclaimed money, says Marietta Jelks, a consumer education expert at USA.gov, and it takes mere minutes to track it down and start getting it back. The mistake most people make is hiring someone to find it for them, Jelks says; the fee could be as much as 20 percent of the total find. Head to usa.gov/unclaimed-money for free resources and links to help recover dough from every possible source. Note that unclaimed money may not be held forever. Depending on your state, the government could reclaim it in as few as five years.

Check in other states:

Remember to look for unclaimed money in any state you've ever lived in. USA.gov provides links to search each state individually.

Check your old banks: Closed or failed banks are often sources of unclaimed money. Visit the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's website (fdic.gov) to see if you're owed money from a failed bank.

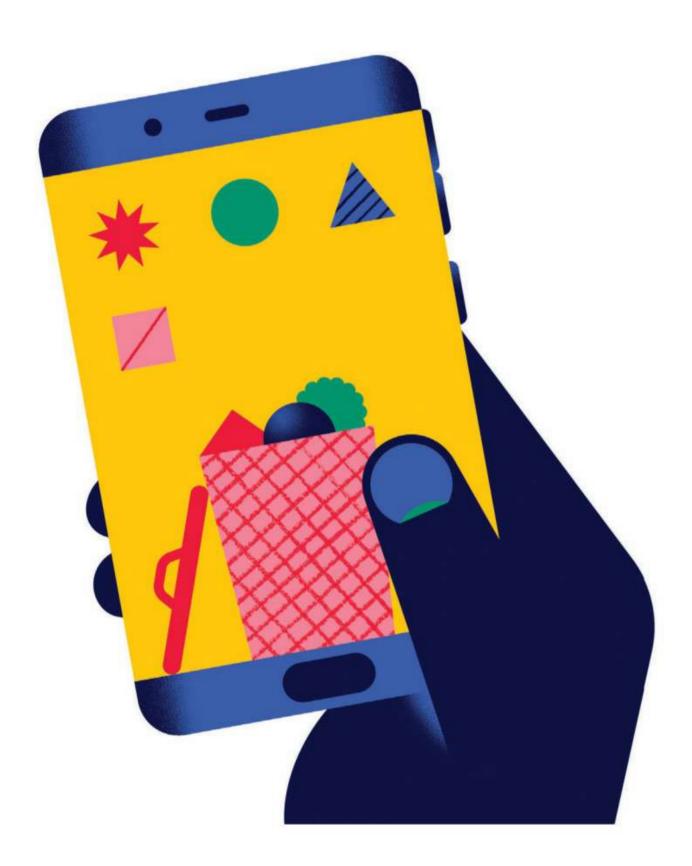
Check for undeliverables:

Often money that should be yours—such as tax returns and security deposits—doesn't find its way to you because there's no forwarding address. The funds are remitted to the unclaimed money offices, Jelks says, which are searchable by state through USA.gov. —*M.U.*



Free Up Space on Your Phone

Unused apps are a total eyesore—and an unnecessary drain on precious phone data. To create a more efficient and attractive home screen, start with a good old-fashioned app purge. Determine which apps you use the least by checking your phone's battery usage in the settings. Jot down the ones you only use once or twice a month and manually delete them. (It's unlikely you'll miss the apps, but you can always redownload when necessary.) Next, declutter your home screen by dragging and dropping apps into folders. Categorize each folder by color or purpose: For example, use the label "Listen" for Audible and Spotify and "Watch" for YouTube and Netflix. —Rachel Sylvester



To create a more efficient and attractive home screen, start with a good old-fashioned app purge.



TRY A BIKE COMMUTE

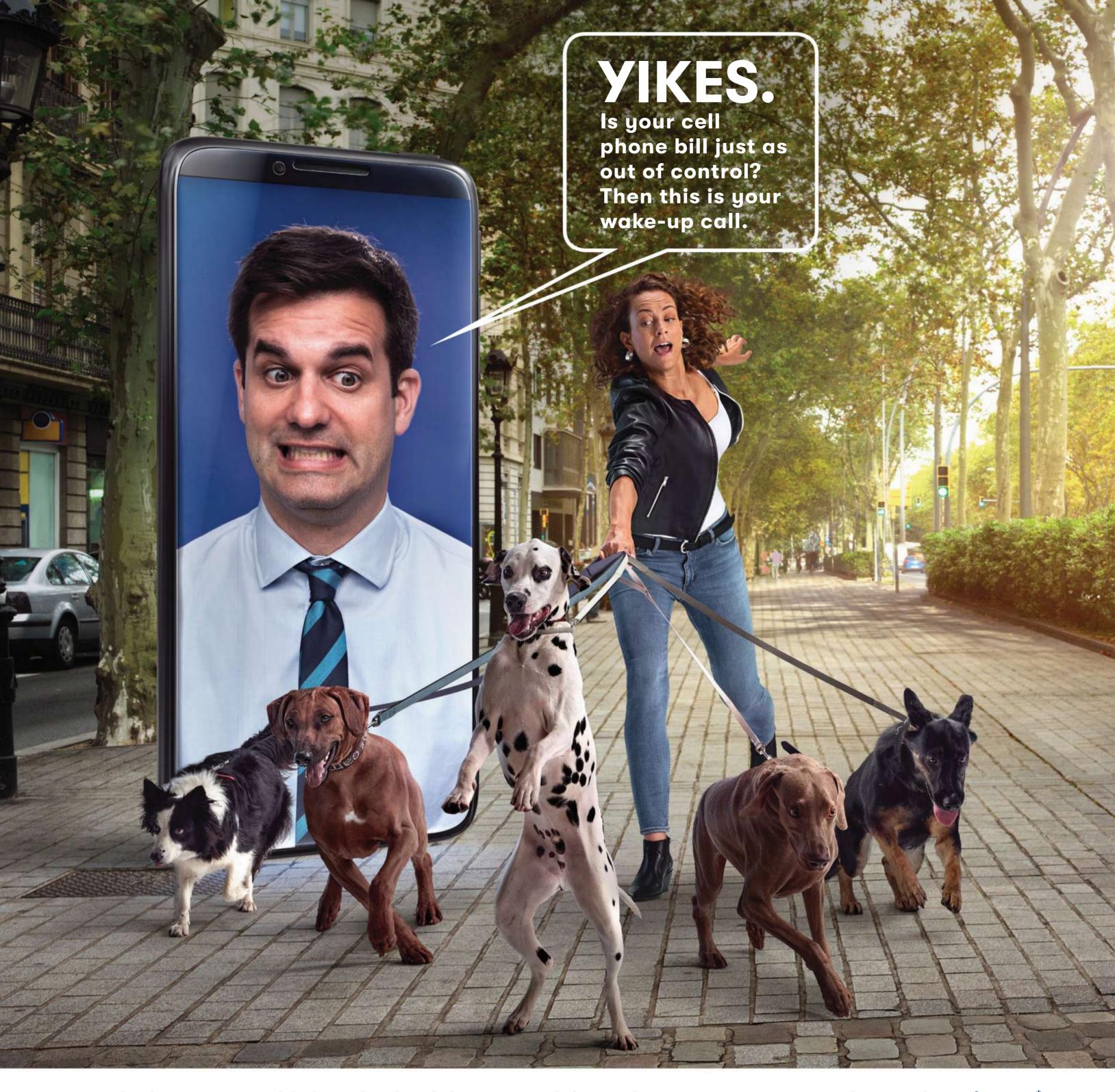
Still a little wary of public transit, or just tired of gridlock traffic in the morning? John Fowler, senior vice president at Huffy, has been biking to work for 28 years—and he shares his top tips.

Ease into it: Plug your work address into a map app and check the available routes; a 10-mile journey or less is great for beginners. The way you drive to work might not be suitable for biking, so consider a longer route that helps you avoid heavy vehicle traffic—or better yet, look for a designated bike lane or path. Take a test ride before your first commute to get familiar with your chosen route. Remember that your commute should be a relaxing activity, not a scene out of Mad Max.

Choose your ride: If you're shopping for a bike, look for one that has at least three gears and a seat that puts you in a comfortable riding position. There's no universal commuter bike, so think about your route and preferences. If you already own a bike, take it in for a quick maintenance check.

Be prepared: Make sure there's enough air in your tires, and outfit your bike with a bell, lights and reflectors, and a sturdy lock. You'll also want a hand air pump and a spare inner tube in case you get a flat. Before you hit the road, pack a waterproof bag with a change of clothes, rain gear, and body wipes so you can freshen up before clocking in.

-Brandi Broxson



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FIND A THERAPIST

Searching for the right therapist "is a little like dating," says Maliha Khan, a therapist at the Menninger Clinic in Houston. "You may have to go through a few trials to find the one." Here's how to meet your match.

Clarify your goals: Many therapists specialize in one or more areas—like career counseling, addiction, or selfesteem issues—so having a clear objective will help focus your search. Also consider what approach appeals to you. If you're looking to unearth the source of unhealthy relationship patterns, you may prefer traditional talk therapy (also called psychodynamic therapy), which delves into the root causes of emotions. If you want to address a specific behavior say, social anxiety—you may opt for a targeted method, like cognitive behavioral therapy, which challenges unhelpful thoughts, usually through practical exercises. Can't decide? Some practitioners offer a combination of approaches.

Shop around: Even if a trusted friend has a therapist they love, counselors aren't like hairstylists—it's generally not a good idea for both of you to see the same one. "Therapists are

careful about confidentiality," says Jeffery Smith, MD, a psychiatrist and therapy trainer in Scarsdale, New York, "but patients can't help being distracted by the knowledge that we're getting two different storiesnot to mention jealousy and concerns about whose 'side' we're on." However, your friend's therapist might be happy to offer a referral. Khan and Smith also recommend searching for a therapist at psychologytoday.com or goodtherapy.org. You can filter by location, gender, fee, accepted insurance, and type of therapy. You can also check out a candidate's credentials (clinical social workers have master's degrees; psychiatrists have medical degrees), years of experience, areas of expertise, and even photo. To verify a clinician's license, contact your state board, or try searching for the therapist on your state board's license verification website.

Unfortunately, therapy, like most health care, is not cheap. If you need a more affordable solution, find out whether your company offers free short-term therapy through an employee assistance program. Or try your community health center, your place of worship, or the psychology department at a nearby college or

university, which may provide services at a reduced rate or on a sliding scale (the lower your income, the lower the fee). Other options: the websites Talkspace and BetterHelp, which take some guesswork out of the process. You fill out a questionnaire and get matched with a licensed therapist. For a weekly fee, you receive counseling via video sessions and text messaging. Though research has shown that video therapy is just as effective as the face-to-face kind, texting should be a supplement to care, not a substitute for it, says John Torous, MD, director of digital psychiatry at Harvard Medical School's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. "Asynchronous texting—when a client sends a text and might not get a response until hours later—removes the therapeutic bond, which is the active ingredient in mental health care."

Make a connection: Some therapists will agree to a free 10-to-15-minute consultation, Khan says. "Come with a list of questions, then tell them about your goals and ask about their approach." That initial contact will help you assess whether you like the vibe, which is more important than any specialty or advanced degree. "Clinical research hasn't found an algorithm for determining who's right for you," Torous says. "Listen to your gut, and see what it says."—Amy Maclin

Therapists aren't like hairstylists—
it's generally not a good idea for friends
to see the same one.



DUST YOUR BELOVED BOOKS

Put down the damp microfiber cloth, says Brandy O'Briant, owner of the book-subscription service Page 1 Books. You don't want water—even a little—near paper pages. Instead, try the Redecker Goat Hair Book Dust Brush (\$25; amazon.com) or Swiffer Dusters, which is O'Briant's go-to tool. —Leslie Corona

Make a Family Giving Plan

VOLUNTEER TOGETHER

Call a family meeting and reflect on how you'd like to spend time as a group.

Maybe you want to pitch in at a monthly beach cleanup or an animal shelter. Check volunteermatch.org and goldenvolunteer.com for local opportunities.

GIVE FOOD YEAR-ROUND

"Due to Covid, there's need all the time," says Kay Carter, **CEO of Second Harvest Food** Bank of Metrolina in Charlotte, North Carolina. "Since many children are learning remotely, we're trying to make sure they receive the food they'd receive if they were in school." Before donating, contact your local food bank to find out what items it needs. Consider giving sought-out items like fresh produce, meat, and dairy rather than cans when possible. Sometimes funds are more helpful than goods, especially for donation centers with reduced staff during the pandemic.

AUTOMATE FINANCIAL

and how much you'd like to give, then set up automatic donations. Give once a month rather than at the end of the year. "Receiving recurring support from donors throughout the year lets organizations plan and adapt more quickly," says Phil Buchanan, president of the Center for Effective Philanthropy. —R.S.

Clean Grimy Mini Blinds

Start by vacuuming closed blinds horizontally with a brush attachment, says Sarah McAllister, director and CEO of GoCleanCo, a cleaning company. This will pick up much of the filth and make the rest of the job easier. Then tilt the blinds so you can clean the other side. Next, fill a bucket with hot water and add a teaspoon of powdered laundry detergent or a dishwasher pod. (McAllister swears by pods for kitchen blinds—they cut through dusty grease exceptionally well.) Dip a microfiber cloth in the solution. then, working from top to bottom, pinch each slat with your cloth-covered hand and swipe horizontally. Replace your water often with a freshly mixed batch, and don't forget to wipe the pull cord! -L.C.





ORGANIZE YOUR RECIPES

Emily Teel, senior food editor at Better Homes & Gardens, relies on the app Paprika Recipe Manager (\$5; iOS and Android). "I can download magazine recipes from the publication's website, and I can even save recipes from a library book by snapping a photo." Teel also likes being able to customize categories ("chicken," "vegan," "entertaining"). Paprika automatically syncs with all your devices, so you can save a recipe on your laptop and then access it on your phone at the grocery store. Still prefer paper? Grab a threering binder and a box of clear sheet protectors. Label each sheet protector by category, sort your recipes into the corresponding categories, and add them to the binder. Using a one-size-fits-all system like this means you can corral Nana's recipe cards plus anything you tear out of a magazine or print from a website. —Jenna Helwig

Bring Your Résumé into 2021

NIX OLD-SCHOOL SECTIONS

There's no need for references, objective sentences, and extracurriculars, says
Sarah Dewey, a technical recruiter and career expert at Jobscan, a résumé-building site. "They can make it harder to find the skills and experience I'm searching your résumé for," she explains.

KEEP IT SIMPLE Avoid fancy formatting and use a résumé template from Microsoft Word or Pages instead. Be concise and clearly convey your hard skills with specific examples, Dewey says. Mention whether you have remote experience too. "Demonstrating that you have less of a learning curve in our new work environment is a real benefit," she says. Don't be ashamed of career gaps, especially ones that occurred during the pandemic. "That said, it can be beneficial to include what you've been doing to keep your skills sharp—like taking online classes or pursuing side projects," Dewey notes.

MAKE IT ADAPTABLE

Many larger companies use applicant tracking systems to help recruiters scan résumés and find the most qualified applicants. "Make sure the keywords mentioned in the job description appear prominently in your résumé so a recruiter can quickly see you're a match," Dewey says. Keep a bank of skills in a separate document, and pull from it to fine-tune your résumé for different jobs. —B.B.



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SHAVE MONEY OFF YOUR HOMEOWNERS AND AUTO INSURANCE PREMIUMS

Focus on safety: Installing deadbolts, a fire extinguisher, or a security system can get you up to 10 percent off your homeowners insurance, says Fabio Faschi, property and casualty operations manager with Policygenius, an insurance comparison site. On your car, features like a backup camera and antitheft device may qualify you for a better auto insurance rate. And taking a safe-driving course can earn you a discount of up to 15 percent. Check your local department of motor vehicles or AAA branch for an online or in-person class.

Installing something as simple as a deadbolt could trim your bill by 10 percent.

Try basic upgrades: Save up to 5 percent by etching your vehicle identification number onto your windshield (you can buy a DIY kit for about \$20). This can help authorities identify and recover your car if it's stolen, says Penny Gusner, senior consumer analyst at Insure.com. As for your home, replacing your roof could save you 5 percent. If you have a basement, installing a sump pump could lower your rate, depending on the amount of water backup coverage you have. An automatic water shut-off valve, which protects against flooding from a burst pipe, could also get you a 3 to 5 percent discount, Faschi says.

Save by bundling: If you purchase your home and auto policies from the same company, you could receive up to 20 percent off, Gusner says. Bundling identity theft insurance and life insurance could also save you 2 to 5 percent. -B.B.

PLAN A SAFER SUMMER TRIP

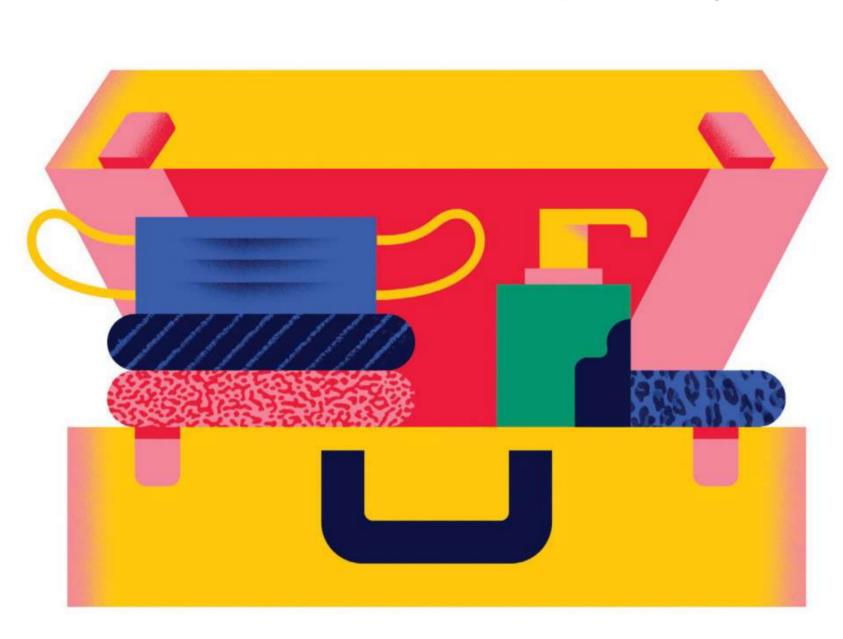
If you're staying at a hotel:

Many big-name hotels are following enhanced cleaning protocols, says Ravina Kullar, MPH, an infectious disease expert in Los Angeles. "Hilton's CleanStay program ensures extra disinfecting of guest rooms and public areas," she says. Both Hyatt and Marriott have implemented similar programs. Before you book, check if the hotel has the seal of approval from Sharecare and Forbes Travel Guide, says Jacqueline Gifford, editor in chief of Travel + Leisure: At forbestravel guide.com/verified, you'll find a list of hotels that meet rigorous standards for cleaning, mask wearing, and ventilation. More than 500 hotels have been verified worldwide already.

If you're renting a place: Choose one that will be vacant for 24 to 48 hours before your arrival, and confirm it will be properly cleaned, Kullar says. Airbnb is asking hosts to commit to a five-step cleaning process; look for the "Enhanced Clean" label in the

listing, Gifford says. It's probably not necessary to bring your own linens, since science has shown that the coronavirus is transmitted mainly through respiratory droplets in the air. Even so, Kullar and Gifford suggest packing antibacterial cleaning products so you're prepared just in case.

If you're headed to a popular tourist destination: Kullar prefers beaches and national parks to theme parks because it's typically easier to maintain social distance. "Double mask by layering a disposable mask under a cloth mask, and avoid public restrooms," she says. Opt for attractions operating at reduced capacity, which is often noted on the website. "Many world-class art museums are at reduced capacity, and you can view the art more closely than you usually would with big crowds," Gifford points out. No matter where you're going, brush up on the current safety guidelines and quarantine requirements of the state you'll be visiting. -M.U.



Tidy the Crafts Stockpile

You're hardly alone if, during Covid, your home slowly started resembling the art room at the school your kid wasn't attending. The key to organizing all those supplies is to first tamp down your impulse to buy more: "Kids feel overwhelmed when they have too much. More things doesn't mean more creativity," says organizer Shauna Yule Brasseur of Lovely Life Home in Hingham, Massachusetts. Once you've donated what your kids don't use, sort the keepers into clear, labeled shoeboxes. Designate one box for smaller items, like beads and pompoms; store them in the box in clear jars, she says. Nikki Boyd, an organizer in Charleston, South Carolina, recommends stashing a "creativity box" in the pantry. Kids often want to do crafts at the kitchen table, and "it keeps them occupied while you're making dinner." Store drawing and construction paper vertically in magazine holders or file folders so kids can pluck out just a piece or two. When your mini Amy Sherald gets going on a masterpiece and bedtime beckons, put the project in a handled tray, says Ashley Murphy, cofounder of Neat Method. "It keeps the space clutter-free until next time." -Rory Evans



COLLECTION

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LIVES



1

Read to a loved one.

Sitting down with a book and another person—a child, a spouse, or an elderly relative—can produce a neurochemical shift that creates feelings of calm, closeness, and well-being. Besides offering the pleasure of a shared story, reading aloud promotes happier family relationships, enhances children's social and emotional development, and stimulates cognitive activity in older adults while mitigating loneliness. And it's fun!

MEGHAN COX GURDON IS THE AUTHOR OF THE ENCHANTED HOUR: THE MIRACULOUS POWER OF READING ALOUD IN THE AGE OF DISTRACTION.

2

Be a good neighbor.

Early in the pandemic, a neighbor asked if I needed anything from the store. I didn't, but the moment still made me feel like there was someone I could count on, and that felt nice. Not only did the gesture reduce my stress, but research suggests my neighbor likely benefited as well. Making a kind offer starts a cycle of appreciation and gratitude. I was thankful for my neighbor, which made me greet her more enthusiastically the next time we saw each other, which made her pleased she had reached out. Such feelings spread, like good contagion.

JULIANNE HOLT-LUNSTAD, PHD, IS A PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY.

These days, we must learn to read eyes, tone of voice, and posture to see what's going on behind the mask.

3

Shower friends with small presents.

A thoughtful gift, especially a homemade one, can cement a bond. Gifts are often a symbol of how much we value a friendship. When you can see your best pals in person again, wash your hands and throw your arms around each other. But consider acknowledging how much you care for them with a little gift too.

LYDIA DENWORTH IS THE AUTHOR OF FRIENDSHIP: THE EVOLUTION, BIOLOGY, AND EXTRAORDINARY POWER OF LIFE'S FUNDAMENTAL BOND.

4

Start a gratitude chain.

To remain connected to my kids and grandkids, I started an email chain for the 12 of us, in which we each list five things we're grateful for.

The subject line is "Gratitude," and seeing it pop up in my inbox has become an unexpected delight.

One person might say, "I'm so grateful my brother makes me laugh when I'm angry." Whatever serious or silly thing anyone writes brings me closer to them.

LYNNE TWIST IS THE FOUNDER OF THE SOUL OF MONEY INSTITUTE AND THE AUTHOR OF THE SOUL OF MONEY: TRANSFORMING YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MONEY AND LIFE.

5

Hang on to what you've learned.

It's important to be attuned to others' nonverbal cues. My colleagues and I teach those skills to people who want to be more empathetic. In the best of times, we're often distracted by a friend's new hairstyle or by the plans we're making, and that may cause us to miss what's right in front of us. These days, we must learn to read eyes, tone of voice, and posture to see what's going on behind the mask.

PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY AT HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL AND THE FOUNDER AND CEO OF EMPATHETICS INC., WHICH PROVIDES EMPATHY TRAINING FOR HEALTH CARE PRACTITIONERS.

Modern Manners Advice for Your Social Quandaries

BY CATHERINE NEWMAN



B.L. ASKS...

My brother-in-law is really into drawing comics and superheroes. He's been trying to bond with our toddler by giving us prints of his drawings on mounted canvas. Though it's sweet he wants to connect with our son, the canvases are enormous and plentiful, and we have no interest in hanging them in our home. Can I ask him to stop, or do we keep storing the art in our garage?

This situation is unconventional but working just fine. Your brother-in-law enjoys making the art, you've got space to stash it, and everybody's happy. If he asks after it, explain that you love the gifts but have no room for them in the house. And consider inviting him to make comics with your toddler: Your son could narrate scenes or they could draw together, and the collaborative creativity would be more meaningful for both of them. If that's not compelling to him, then he may well be more interested in his own talent than your son's experience, which I suspect might be what's bothering you to begin with.



HAVE AN ETIQUETTE QUESTION?

Hover your phone's camera here to submit your question for Catherine, or email her at modernmanners@realsimple.com.

J.C. ASKS...

My widowed father-in-law lives with us and has health issues. He always joins us for dinner, even though he uses a feeding tube and doesn't eat. I love that our 2-year-old sees his grandpa every day, but I'd like us to have moments just as a family. How do I ask him to give us some dinners alone without making him feel unwelcome?

You've done a lovely thing, bringing your father-in-law into your home. Now that he's there, you can't ask for a break from his company without sowing terrible seeds of doubt about how welcome he is. Whether or not he eats, chances are good that dinner is a highlight of his day; your request for him to stay in his room would feel dreadful to both of you. Can you create special family moments elsewhere? Bathing your son, say, or putting him to bed? Or could you take him out for a slice of pizza while your husband spends some quality time with his dad? These are imperfect solutions, but—as you're probably painfully aware-you hold the fragile bubble of a family in your hands.

B.D. ASKS...

I love dogs, and I've owned big breeds. I recently bought a home with two huge dogs next door. The owner never picks up after them, and her yard is covered in poop. I can't open my windows without the stench drifting in. How do I approach my new neighbor about this?

Try framing the issue not as a judgment but as a dilemma: "Your dogs are so lovely," you can say. "I love living next door to them. But I'm increasingly sensitive to the smell of dog poop, which comes into my house. Would you be willing to problem-solve with me about it?" Ultimately, unless your town has ordinances (and I would hope never to call the authorities on my next-door neighbor), she can do what she likes in her own space. Your best bet is mentioning how it affects you and hoping for courtesy. You could even offer to help her blitz through the yard with a scooper and bag, to get things started. Otherwise, consider cleverly placed window fans and scented candles.



C.R. ASKS...

I've been married to a wonderful man for 21 years.
Every holiday and birthday (our birthdays are two days apart), my in-laws send us each a check. My husband's check is always for five times as much money as mine.
I think this is incredibly rude and hurtful. Why don't they total the amount and give us both half? Do I dare mention it to them? I don't want to seem ungrateful.

Here's my advice: Be grateful, be annoyed, let it go (in that order). Is the asymmetry weird? Totally! Are parentsin-law often weird? They are. As are parents, for that matter. By the time you came along, these folks were probably in the habit of gifting their son generously. Maybe they tacked you onto some lesser girlfriend list—and then never adjusted. Or they like to imagine that you don't pool resources. Or the smaller amount is meant to suggest, irritatingly, that you're still not quite family. If there are other spouses you can gossip with, have at it. In any case, write a thank-you note and remind yourself to do better if you're ever the one writing checks.

E.S. ASKS...

We purchased a beach house as a second home for ourselves and our five kids. Now we're constantly fielding questions from family and friends about using it when we're not there. We don't want to open it to guests. We explain that we don't have maid service or rental liability insurance. How do we deal with these requests without sounding uncharitable?

The liability issue is your easiest out here: "We don't actually have the right insurance for that." Done. And nobody needs to take it personally. But! What if you stretched toward expansiveness? You could ask guests to contribute to the insurance, request that they hire and pay for a cleaning service, and leave a list (as many Airbnb hosts do) of housekeeping tasks. If all this serves as a deterrent, well, perfect. But if someone someone you trust—is still desperate for an affordable vacation that you could help provide? You totally don't have to, but maybe it would be worth it.

ABOUT CATHERINE

The author of How to Be a Person:
65 Hugely Useful, Super-Important
Skills to Learn Before You're Grown Up,
Catherine Newman gets advice
from her husband and two
opinionated, largely grown children
in Amherst, Massachusetts.



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FAMILY

The Many Ways to Manage Memories

A picture is worth a thousand words—but only if you can easily access it. Showcase your family's most meaningful moments with these digital photo hacks.

BY RACHEL SYLVESTER

THINK FAST: How many photos are on your phone's camera roll at this very moment? For me, the answer is a staggering 11,941—my small contribution to the estimated 1.4 trillion (yes, trillion) photos captured worldwide in 2020.

The technological advances of digital photography and the convenience of my ever-present iPhone have made it quite literally a snap to record the minutiae of daily life. The only issue: Despite constant documentation and a library of nearly 12,000 pictures, I have only a single framed photo in my apartment. Uploading the best of the best to Instagram takes seconds, but I often want a more permanent, less public way to commemorate moments. Of course I'm going to post that latest loaf of banana bread, but do I really want a photo of it framed on my nightstand?

My self-imposed challenge during the pandemic was to organize both my digital and old-school printed pics, honor the ones I loved, and display the very favorites. Here's how you, too, can make sure your most precious moments aren't stuck in a cardboard box or the formidable cloud.

TO BUY: Mixtiles, \$11 each; mixtiles.com.



Find Them

LOCATE FORGOTTEN FILES

Traditional prints are typically stored in albums and shoeboxes. Between me, my mom, and my grandmother, we have enough to fill the back of a small U-Haul. Digital photos are a little trickier to track down. Check high and low for far-flung storage devices, from dusty flash drives and memory cards to long-abandoned tablets and phones (unless your photos were automatically synced to cloud storage, that is). Scroll through your social media accounts and old photo-storage platforms (remember Flickr?) to scrounge up images and albums from your digital-camera days. Revisit text threads to save sentimental snaps shared between family and friends.

Edit Them

CLEAN UP YOUR CAMERA ROLL

I got into the weekly habit of clearing out old screenshots and digital duplicates on my phone. Vanessa Quigley, cofounder of the photo-printing service Chatbooks, does the same. She carves out time on Sunday evenings to ruthlessly review and remove personal pics. "I put some music on and favorite the photos I like best so they're easy to find later on," she says. If you have thousands to go through, as I did, do this in 10-minute chunks, like when you're on hold with the bank or waiting for the self-checkout line to move.

EMBRACE THE DELETE BUTTON

If you have a large collection of photos, start with your most recent snaps and move backward. My friend pointed out that beginning with the older memories—like photos of her now tween as a newborn-bogs her down in sentimentality and seriously minimizes efficiency. Delete shaky shots, mystery photos, duplicates, and images you can't easily identify. This means bidding adieu to blurry pictures of the dog and those dozen or so pics you snapped of your homemade berry tart. To eliminate duplicates in a hurry, professional organizer Julie Bestry suggests PhotoSweeper (\$10; overmacs.com) for Macs and Duplicate Cleaner (\$30; duplicate cleaner.com) for PCs.

Store Them

AUTOMATE YOUR BACKUP

Once I finally had my selects, I dished out some cash for an external hard drive, where I could safely gather original images in a single, space-efficient location. (The Mac- and PC-compatible LaCie Rugged Mini External Drive costs \$80 and can be found at Staples or on Amazon.) Alternatively, you could subscribe to an online repository, like Google Photos or Apple's iCloud Photos (starting at \$1 per month, for 50 GB of storage). "Both options will sort photos by date and allow you to do shockingly smart searches by typing 'baby' or 'food,'" Bestry says.

INVEST IN A QUALITY SCANNER

Everyone and their cousin wants a copy of heirloom photos, such as that snap of your smiling grandparents on their honeymoon. A scanner makes it easy to share the assets. Look for a wireless option with an adjustable tray that allows photos to be fed through the device one after the other. The Home Edit founders Clea Shearer and Joanna Teplin swear by the compact Brother DS-940DW (\$180; brother .com) for its color quality.

CREATE A BACKUP DATABASE WITH DROPBOX

As for that U-Haul's worth of photos from my family's archive, I found that Dropbox was the perfect receptacle for them, since it lets all of us share the memories and print photos (more on that in a sec). Available from \$12 per year for desktop, iOS, and Android, Dropbox offers secure folders that can be accessed by multiple users, making it ideal for uploading large quantities of images, like ones from a wedding or family reunion.

Check high and low for far-flung storage devices, from dusty flash drives to long-abandoned tablets.



Enjoy Them

PUT FAMILY ALBUMS ON AUTOPILOT

Snapping a pic (or 20) of my boyfriend at the beach is easy, but enjoying said snap is impossible if it's lost in a sea of screenshots. The Chatbooks app can automatically upload photos from your Instagram and Facebook feeds, helping you bypass an overwhelming number of outtakes and create carefully curated albums. Chatbooks also offers a Monthly Mini subscription, enabling you to print 30 photos from your camera roll in a softcover book. The service costs \$5 per month, and you'll never miss commemorating a special moment again. (Not to mention it can serve as a nice reminder that daily highlights do exist, even during quarantine.)

MAKE IT ART

You don't have to paint like Picasso to turn still-life images into stunning keepsakes. The Waterlogue app (\$5; iOS) transforms the photos you hold near and dear into one-of-a-kind watercolor images with just a few taps. The renderings truly look like paintings, and you can immediately print your artwork from home and frame the resulting masterpiece. That friend who gets bogged down in her kid's baby pictures? She's used Waterlogue for some favorite candids of her chonk of a toddler, and she swears they look like Mary Cassatts.



TO BUY: Aura Mason Frame, \$199; auraframes.com.

SPRING FOR A SMART FRAME

The latest innovative smart frames display your photos wirelessly, no printing required. Take Aura (from \$199; auraframes.com) or Skylight (\$159; skylightframe.com). These Wi-Fi digital frames let you—and friends and family members you invite to a private network—upload memories in a matter of minutes. Once you set up your frame, you can share pics in real time, showing off family photos with your in-laws, say, while you're still on vacation.

SIMPLIFY FRAMING AND HANGING

My least favorite at-home activity—hanging wall art—is made instantly more manageable with Mixtiles, a photo-printing service that delivers self-stick frames to your door. Each eight-by-eight-inch photo costs \$11 to print and features an adhesive backing you can stick (and restick) to surfaces throughout your home.

SHARE IN-THE-MOMENT SNAPS

There's only so much wall real estate in my one-bedroom apartment for printed photos. And sure, I have Instagram, but my Grandma Sly most definitely does not. To share images with her and other off-the-'gram relatives, I like the app Tinybeans (free; iOS and Android), which offers the ease of a group text but with the sole purpose of secure photo sharing. Everyone you invite to follow your Tinybeans journal will receive weekly upload updates.

PRINT THE UNEXPECTED

Transfer photos off your device with a little help from Social Print Studio. The convenient photo-printing service sells classics like holiday cards and photo books, but that's just the tip of the imagery iceberg. Up your scrapbook game with pocket-size stickers and photo strips, or shop custom calendars, posters, necklaces, magnets, and button pins—just like the ones Grandma Sly used to proudly wear as a badge of honor.





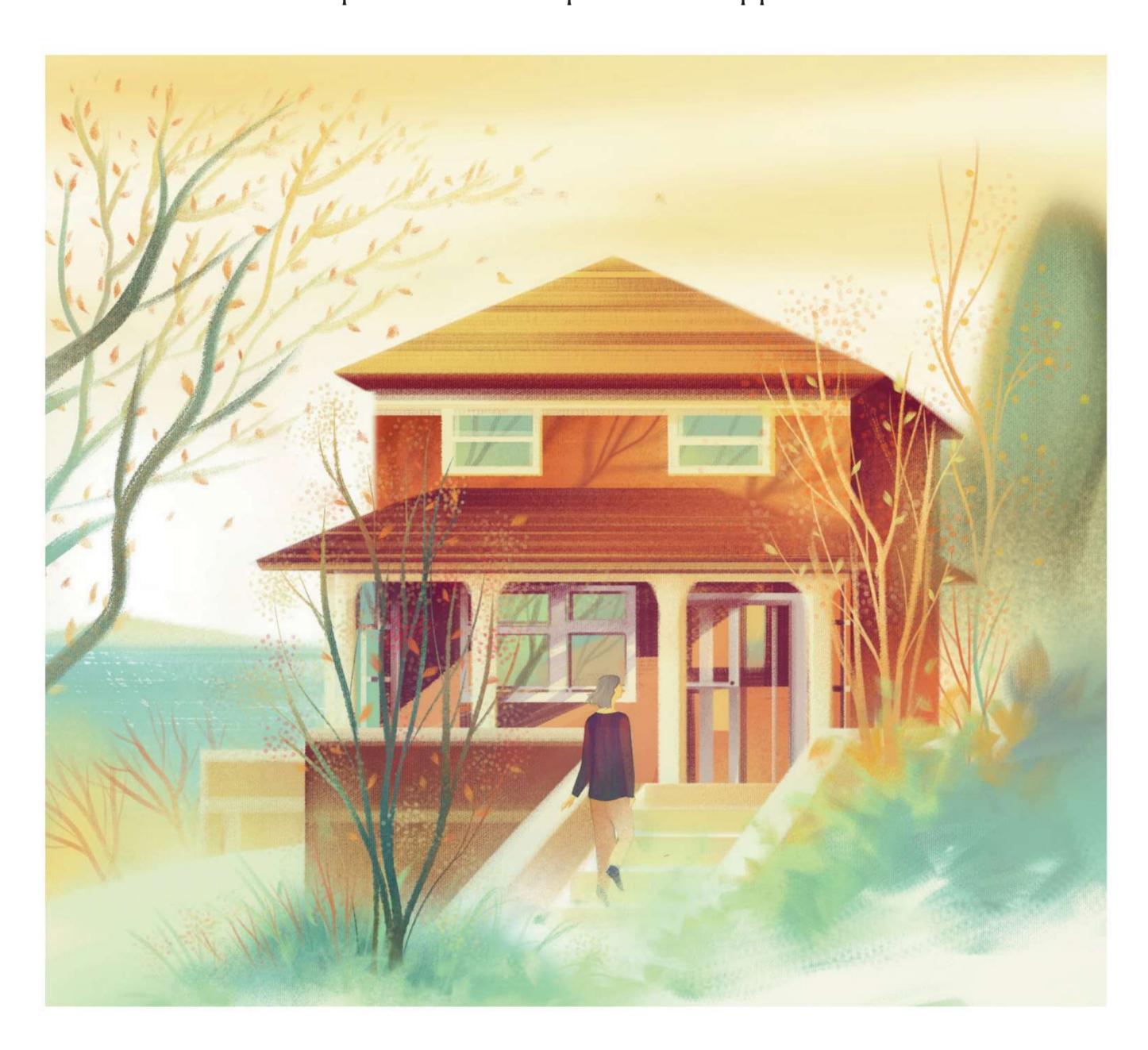
You love one-stop shopping because it simplifies your life, and usually saves you money, right? When it comes to insurance, GEICO's your one-stop shop to help you save when you box up coverage for all your needs — like homeowners, motorcycle, boat, RV insurance, and more. Go to geico.com to see how easy it is to get great savings all in one spot with GEICO.



FIRST PERSON

HEAD OVER HEELS FOR A HOUSE

In a midlife crisis, some wives sneak off to have salacious affairs. *Erica Bauermeister,* feeling restless, simply gave all her passion to a heap of a fixer-upper.



90 **REAL SIMPLE** MAY 2021 Illustration by Jasu Hu





Y HUSBAND HAD AN AFFAIR with a kayak once. It was a long, dark winter in Seattle, and his job was close to intolerable although he didn't admit that at the time. What he did do was buy a kit for a wooden

kayak. Every evening, every weekend, he went down to the basement and put long, thin slats of wood together, filling the house with the sounds of sanding and the fumes of varnish. Our kids were young and bursting with energy, and it rained a lot that year. I was furious. I didn't understand.

At least not until years later, when I fell in love with a house. As with many affairs, I didn't see it coming. We'd been exploring the wild Olympic Peninsula of Washington State, and in the process we became enchanted by an old Victorian seaport town, Port Townsend, perched on the northern edge. It was small and quiet, so different from our bustling city life. As we drove up the hills and around the curves of the meandering streets, suddenly, there it was. My house.

What was actually there: asbestos shingles, boarded-up windows, a tilting foundation, decades of trash, vegetation rising up walls like a king tide. What I saw: straightforward architectural lines and a graceful front porch—a soul inside that pile of wood and nails. The house that had been, could be, rather than what was.

People who say houses are silent just aren't listening. This one practically shouted my name. Why? At the time, I had no idea. What I do know is that I fell in love, as hard and fast as anyone first seeing Brad Pitt saunter up to Geena Davis in Thelma & Louise. We all knew he was trouble, knew he was probably going to take the money and run, but boy howdy, did we want him anyway. And I wanted that house. Even though, or perhaps especially because, it made no sense.

At that time in my life, I was in desperate need of diversion. I was a stay-at-home mom and aspiring writer, and not feeling great about my chances of success at either. Our 13-year-old daughter didn't need a mother so much anymore and had the verbal skills to tell me so, often. Our son, then 10, was at the point where he needed to not need his mother so much, and that was hard on both of us. I felt like my life was turning into one of those old sitcoms, on the blackand-white channels people don't watch very often. My husband and I had started out as artists, writers, travelers,



Left: Erica kicks back in her writing shed in the orchard. Right: Light streams into the dining room and sunroom, which have views as far as Mt. Rainier, over 100 miles away.

determined to have a marriage that looked nothing like my parents' 1950s version. And yet Ozzie and Harriet crept out of the TV set and into our home all the same, instilling gender roles that over the years became as inflexible as rebar.

But then, there was the house in Port Townsend. The very drama of it was fascinating. All that trash. All those stories. A chance to undertake a hero's journey, even if I apparently couldn't write one.

"It could be exciting," I said to my husband, and I saw an old fire in his eyes.

It turned out that the owner of the house had just died, an odd coincidence in what would become a serious collection of them. We negotiated with his heirs for months, making, changing, extending offers. At night, I'd lie awake and obsess about the house. I couldn't stand the thought of it out there alone, unloved. My husband wanted the house as well, but I could see him watching me, a bit concerned about my intensity.

Why do we want the things we want? It would have been so much easier if I had fallen in love with our handsome postman instead. But that's not how I'm wired. I was not raised to take such a drastic leap simply for myself. That would be selfish—and thus, no postman. I would do it for a house, however. That would be maternal, not romantic. Altruistic, even artistic, not personal. These are the things we tell ourselves as we step off the edge.

After almost half a year, the heirs agreed to terms, including our offer to clean out the trash. We worked as a family, hauling out 71/2 tons of accumulated objects, sledgehammering old plaster and lath, pulling down those asbestos shingles. If we had thought the work would be bonding, we were both right and terribly wrong. The sheer magnitude



of labor became an almost overwhelming stress. We were in way over our heads.

And then a major earthquake struck. I stood in a friend's home in Seattle, the ground rolling beneath my feet, and thought of the house in Port Townsend. I envisioned the long, jagged crack in its foundation, the 30-foot stone chimney leaning perilously, pulling the house with it. It was all gone; I could feel it.

I drove out the next morning, certain I'd find disaster. But somehow, the house stood, miraculously upright, like a cat dropped 10 feet. The glass had slipped in some of the old windows, and wind whistled through the gaps, but the house was still there, surviving.

I should have headed back to Seattle-there are always aftershocks—but somehow I couldn't leave the house alone. I spent the day like any convert, on my knees, scraping off the carpet backing that had stuck to the old wooden floors like a layer of sludge. Back and forth, back and forth. Just the two of us, a quiet spot in the midst of uncertainty. I understood then that we would take care of each other.

And we did. I ended up overseeing the renovation. My husband was working from home and offered to take on childcare duties while I was at the site during the day. Perhaps he knew, better than I, how itchy my feet, my mind were. Perhaps he'd seen my glance or two at the postman. In any case, the project was mine.

I threw myself into it. Over the next year, I made plans, had fantasies of different lives lived in different rooms. The plans were for my family, but the making of them was for me, for the part of my mind that needed to roam, to create. I developed confidence again, having to work with men who would rather turn to my husband for a decision. As I sledgehammered the plaster and lath from the walls, pulled out dump-truck loads of ivy from the overgrown orchard, I regained my prematernity body. Over the months, the house straightened, stretched. Breathed. So did I.

Every day, I set out with a sense of excitement. I was breaking the rules I had grown up with. Be good. Be quiet. Be safe. The house was none of those. And when I was there, neither was I.

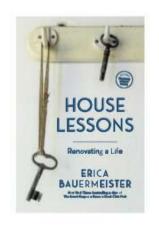
In the end, I was one of the lucky ones. My love affair was with a partner most people would never recognize as such. The house allowed me to discover what many look for in a tangle of sheets-myself, again. Because what I really wanted was what many people want when they have affairs, what my husband wanted when he was in the basement with his kayak: a way to step outside my life for a while. A chance to figure out who I had been, who I could be, rather than who I was now. I needed to remember the girl who believed she could write, the girl who once traveled on her own and swore she would always be an explorer. And I needed to see myself

as a woman, with a vision that filled her imagination and the strength to make it happen. A mother who loved her children but could let them, and herself, go.

As I changed over the course of that year, I started to work with my husband, and my kids, rather than for them. My days away gave us room to see each other once again. And as our family shifted, we underwent a second renovation, equal in magnitude to the first, unexpected, and every bit as beautiful. Because that's the funny thing about renovations—we think we are saving the houses, when it's often the opposite that is true.

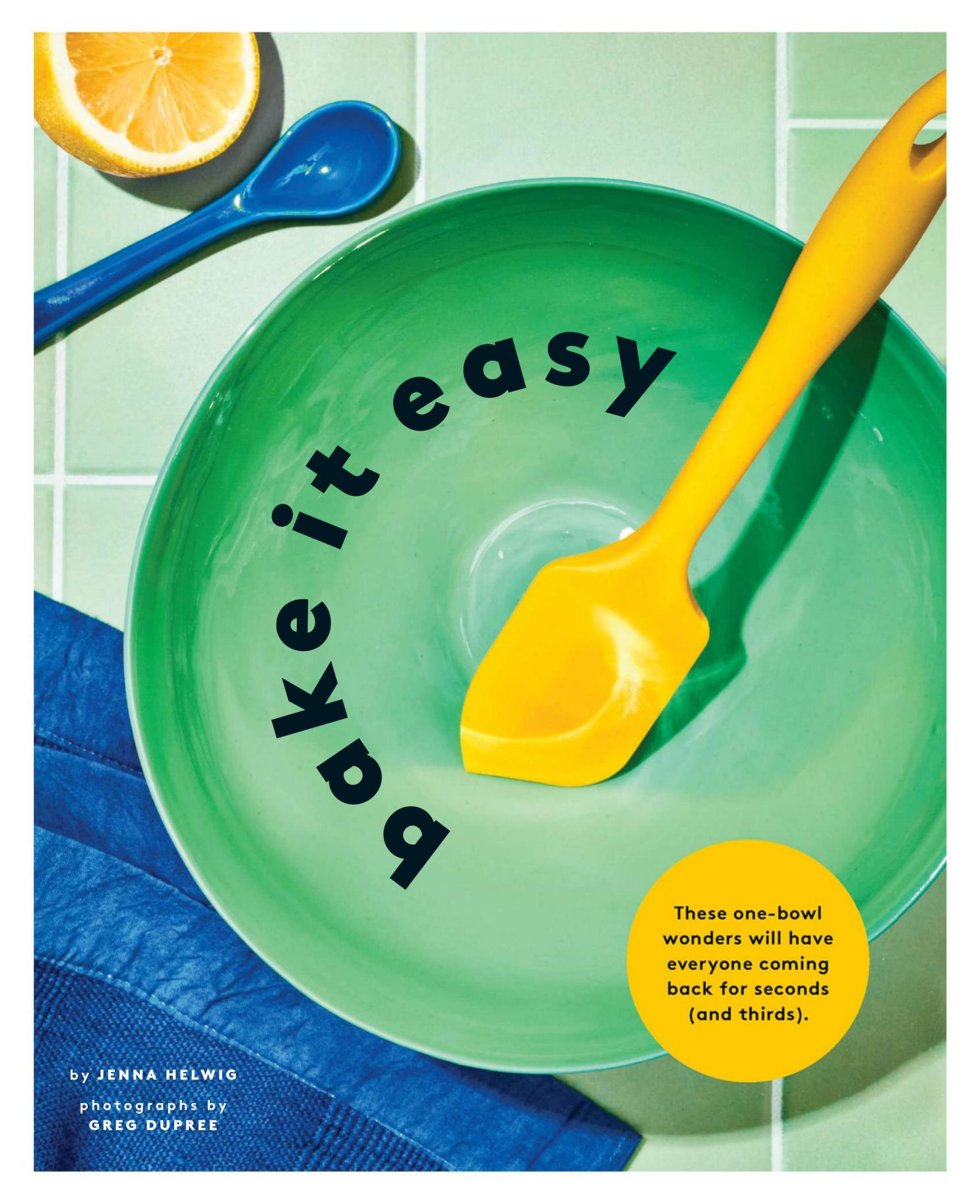
It's now been more than 20 years since we first saw our house in Port Townsend. Over the decades, it has held our celebrations and griefs and love. The room where I once scraped the carpet backing off the floor is now the hub of extended-family dinners. A book nook waits,

halfway up the stairs, for our new granddaughter to sneak up there and read. And down in the orchard, where I pulled out all that ivy, there is a writing shed where I go, by myself, to explore.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Erica Bauermeister has written five books, including the memoir House Lessons and the novel The Scent Keeper, which was a Reese's Book Club pick.









Baking spray with flour keeps these tender muffins from sticking to the tray.

LEMON POPPY SEED MUFFINS WITH LEMON-ROSE GLAZE

ACTIVE TIME 20 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 1 HOUR, 20 MINUTES
(INCLUDES COOLING)
MAKES 12 MUFFINS

Baking spray with flour, such as Baker's Joy or Pam Baking

- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. lemon zest plus 2 Tbsp. fresh juice (from 1 lemon)
- 1 large egg
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1/2 cup canola oil
- 1/2 cup whole buttermilk
- 11/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsp. poppy seeds Lemon-Rose Glaze (page 95), optional

PREHEAT oven to 325°F. Coat cups of a 12-cup muffin tray with baking spray. (Alternatively, line cups with paper baking cups or parchment paper and coat with cooking spray.) Place sugar and lemon zest in a large bowl. Using your fingers, rub zest into sugar until coated and fragrant. Whisk in egg, egg yolk, oil, buttermilk, and lemon juice. Add flour, salt, baking powder, and baking soda; stir until batter is smooth. Stir in poppy seeds.

(about 3 tablespoons each). Bake until center of each muffin springs back when gently pressed, 18 to 22 minutes. Transfer tray to a wire rack and let muffins cool for 10 minutes. Remove muffins from tray and let cool completely on wire rack, about 30 minutes. Top with glaze, if using.

HAZELNUT SWIRL BLONDIES

ACTIVE TIME 15 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME 2 HOURS, 40 MINUTES

(INCLUDES COOLING)

MAKES 16 BLONDIES

Cooking spray

- 3/4 cup (11/2 sticks) unsalted butter
- 1½ cups packed dark brown sugar
 - 2 large eggs
 - 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
 - 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/2 cup toasted unsalted skinned hazelnuts (optional), chopped
- ¹/₃ cup chocolate-hazelnut spread, such as Nutella
- 1/4 tsp. flaky sea salt

PREHEAT oven to 350°F. Coat a 9-inch square baking pan with cooking spray. Line with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on 2 sides. Melt butter in a large pot over medium, stirring occasionally to ensure butter doesn't brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from heat; whisk in sugar until well combined. Whisk in eggs and vanilla.

ADD flour, baking powder, and kosher salt to butter mixture; stir until batter is smooth. Stir in hazelnuts, if using. Transfer batter to baking pan. Spread in an even layer and smooth top.

DOLLOP chocolate-hazelnut spread in tablespoonfuls on top of blondie batter. Drag a wooden pick or a skewer through spread to swirl it slightly (it won't be evenly spread out over batter). Sprinkle with flaky sea salt.

edges are golden (center will still be a bit gooey), 22 to 24 minutes. Transfer baking pan to a wire rack and let blondies cool completely, about 2 hours. Using parchment paper overhang as handles, remove blondies from pan and slice.

EVERYTHING CREAM CHEESE SCONES

ACTIVE TIME 20 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 40 MINUTES
MAKES 8 SCONES

- 1/2 cup whole milk
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for work surface
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. granulated sugar
- 3/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 4 oz. cream cheese, cut into 1-in. pieces and chilled
- 6 Tbsp. (3/4 stick) unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-in. pieces and chilled
- 3 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh chives, divided
- 1 large egg white
- 1 Tbsp. everything bagel seasoning

PREHEAT oven to 400°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Pour milk into a liquid measuring cup. Add egg and whisk to combine.

whisk flour, baking powder, sugar, and salt in a large bowl. Add cream cheese and butter. Using your fingers or a pastry blender, work cream cheese and butter into flour mixture until butter pieces are pea-size or smaller (cream cheese will work in more seamlessly). Pour in milkegg mixture; stir with a wooden spoon or a silicone spatula until mostly combined. Add 2 tablespoons chives; mix with your hands until combined (dough will be stiff). Do not overmix.

TRANSFER dough to a lightly floured surface and pat into an 8-by-6-inch rectangle. Cut dough into 8 (about 3-by-2-inch) rectangles. Arrange at least 2 inches apart on baking sheet.

whisk egg white and 1 teaspoon water in a small bowl. Brush tops of dough rectangles with egg white mixture. Sprinkle with everything bagel seasoning and remaining 1 tablespoon chives. Bake until scones are golden brown, about 20 minutes. Serve warm.

APRICOT ALMOND CAKE

ACTIVE TIME 20 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME 1 HOUR, 40 MINUTES

(INCLUDES COOLING)

SERVES 8

Cooking spray

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ¹/₂ cup almond flour
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 11/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 3/4 cup unsweetened plain almond milk
- 1 tsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- ¹/₂ tsp. pure almond extract
- 1 15-oz. can apricot halves in heavy syrup (such as Del Monte), drained
- 1 Tbsp. apricot preserves

PREHEAT oven to 350°F. Coat a 9-inch springform pan with cooking spray. (If you don't have a springform pan, spray a 9-inch cake pan with cooking spray and line the bottom with a circle of parchment paper.)

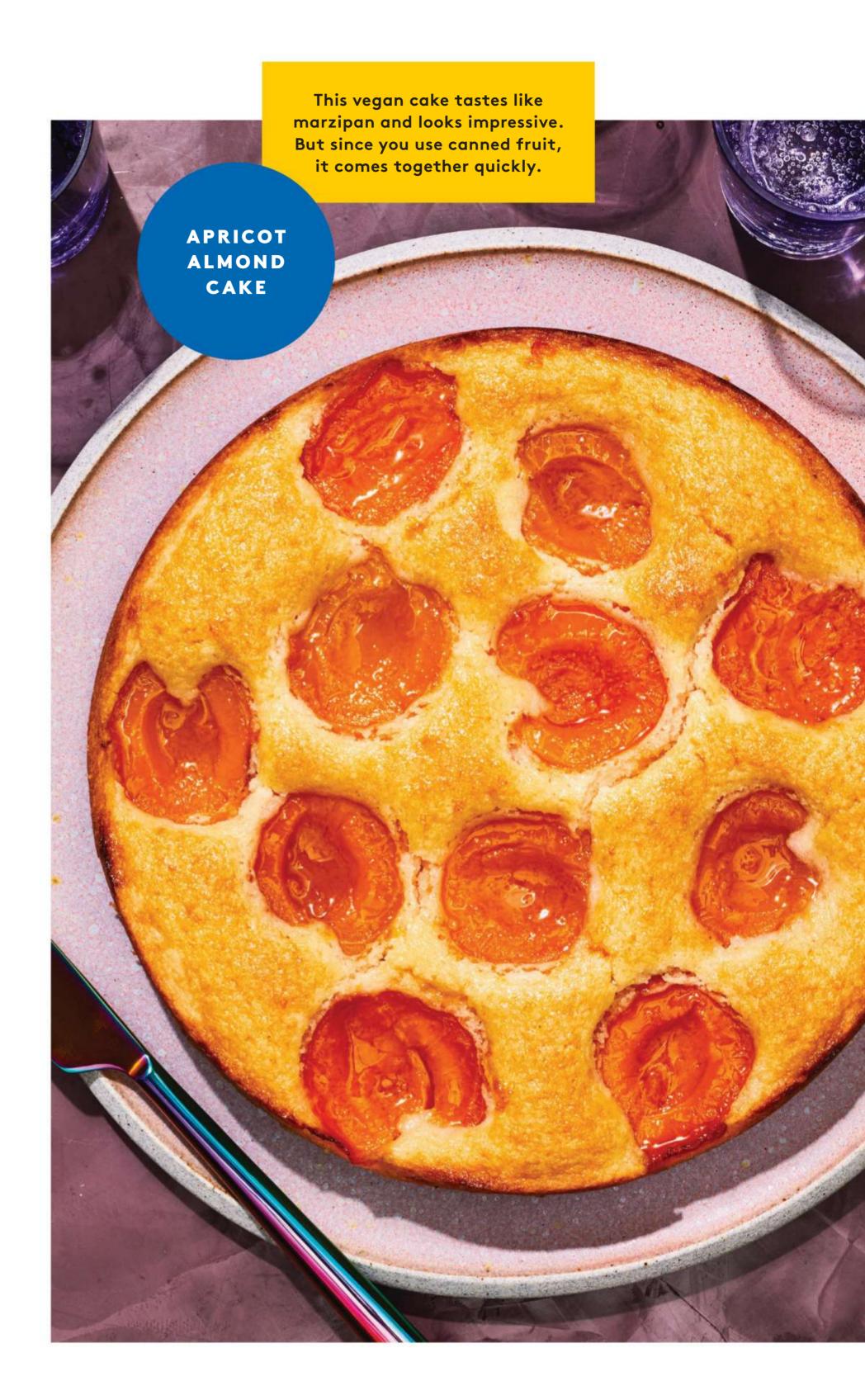
WHISK all-purpose flour, almond flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. Add milk and vinegar; stir to combine. Add oil and almond extract; stir until very well combined, about 60 strokes. Transfer to prepared pan.

ARRANGE apricot halves, cut side up, on top of cake batter. Bake for 30 minutes. During final 2 minutes of baking time, whisk apricot preserves and 1 teaspoon hot water in a small bowl. Remove cake from oven. Brush cake (not apricot halves) with apricot preserve mixture.

RETURN cake to oven and bake until light golden and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 10 to 15 minutes. Transfer pan to a wire rack and let cake cool for 10 minutes. Remove sides of pan and let cake cool completely on wire rack, about 30 minutes.

The gluten in the flour gives this eggless cake structure.

Be sure to stir the batter for the full 60 strokes to activate it.





DOUBLE-CHOCOLATE OATMEAL COOKIES WITH PECANS AND CHERRIES

ACTIVE TIME 20 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 35 MINUTES
MAKES 24 COOKIES

- 2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 3/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 2 large eggs
- 3/4 cup canola oil
- 1/2 cup sweetened dried cherries, chopped
- ¹/₂ cup pecans, chopped
- 2 oz. semisweet chocolate (from a block or bar), finely chopped (about ½ cup)

PREHEAT oven to 350°F. Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. Whisk oats, flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking powder, salt, and baking soda in a large bowl. Make a well in center of mixture. Add eggs and oil to well; whisk eggs and oil inside well to combine.

USING a wooden spoon or a silicone spatula, stir oat mixture and egg mixture until combined. Stir in cherries, pecans, and chopped chocolate.

ROLL dough evenly into 24 balls (about 13/4 inches each). Arrange balls at least 2 inches apart on baking sheets.

BAKE until tops and edges of cookies are set and no longer glossy, 9 to 10 minutes. Let cool on baking sheets for 5 minutes. Transfer cookies to a wire rack. Serve warm or let cool completely, about 1 hour.

The dough may feel crumbly; just give it an extra squeeze to form the cookies. They'll bake perfectly in the oven.



WILD BLUEBERRY AND CHAI BREAD

ACTIVE TIME 20 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 2 HOURS, 50 MINUTES
(INCLUDES COOLING)
MAKES 8 SLICES

- 1 cup whole milk
- 2 chai tea bags, such as Tazo Classic Chai Cooking spray
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- $^{1}\!/_{2}$ cup melted coconut oil or canola oil
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. ground cardamom
- 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
- ¹/₂ tsp. kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp. ground allspice
- 1 cup (4½ oz.) frozen wild blueberries (such as Wyman's), divided
- 1 Tbsp. turbinado sugar

PREHEAT oven to 375°F. Microwave milk in a microwave-safe mug on high until very hot but not boiling, about 2 minutes. Add tea bags; let steep for 15 minutes. Discard tea bags.

coat a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan with cooking spray. Line with parchment paper, leaving at least a 2-inch overhang on each long side. Whisk steeped milk, eggs, granulated sugar, and oil in a large bowl. Add flour, baking powder, cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, salt, and allspice; stir until just combined. Add ³/₄ cup blueberries; stir to combine, using just 2 or 3 strokes. Spoon batter into prepared pan. Sprinkle with remaining ¹/₄ cup blueberries, then sprinkle with turbinado sugar.

BAKE until a wooden pick inserted in center of loaf comes out clean, 1 hour, 5 minutes to 1 hour, 10 minutes. Transfer pan to a wire rack and let bread cool for 10 minutes. Using parchment paper overhang as handles, remove bread from pan. Discard parchment paper. Let bread cool completely on wire rack, about 1 hour.







I Wear Pink

WE LOST MY MOTHER to breast cancer 18 years ago, when I was 33—and she was just 60. Mama was a big-hearted, colorful woman who would turn a person she met in the waiting room of a dentist's office into a friend for life. She raised me to look out for other people, even strangers. She once told me, "Go out of your way to be kind. You never know who's in line in front of you at the grocery store, and what's been going on with 'em."

Mama's nurturing spirit was never more present than when it came to our Southern family. We were a large, blended group that included Mama and my stepfather, Wayne; me and my sister; my three stepsiblings; and an extended family of















What I Wish I Knew *Before* I Renovated

So you're ready to move beyond swapping out throw pillows and actually call a contractor, whether for a small update or a big remodel. These tips will help simplify what can be an overwhelming process.

BY PETRA GUGLIELMETTI
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MITCHELL FEINBERG

F I COULD TRAVEL BACK IN TIME

and talk to my prerenovation self, here's a sample of things I'd say: (1) Assume nothing. You may think it's obvious that refinishing the floors would include that little strip on the opposite side of the stair railing, but your flooring installer may disagree. (2) Do not crowdsource design decisions in your Instagram stories unless you are prepared to triple-guess everything. (3) Most projects will cost more than you expect. As my friend pointed out after redoing her kitchen, even Lisa Vanderpump had to think about her remodeling budget—and she was on *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. If you're planning (or just dreaming about) a closet, room, or whole-house renovation, heed this word-to-the-wise advice from homeowners who've already been through it, so you can pull off a savvy, remorseproof redo.

When It Comes to Your Budget...

Get quotes from local contractors, not homemakeover TV shows.

Homeowners often underestimate the cost of updates. "We discovered that renovating a small kitchen in our area costs at least \$30,000," says Lindsay from Arlington, Virginia, who ended up having to take out a second loan to pay for repairs to her recently purchased ranch.

Ask for an estimate not a textimate.

Andrew is in sales, so he knows the importance of written estimates. His wife, Melissa, assumed that texts counted when they were redoing their deck in Austin, Texas. "I thought we'd be OK," she says. "Famous last words." The foreman for a demo crew gave her an estimate via text. On the day of the work, the company owner asked for \$1,000 more. While the couple ultimately didn't pay it, the rest of the day was tense between them and the workers.

Factor in the price of temporary housing.

During their whole-house renovation in Piedmont, California, Etienne's family stayed in a friend's guesthouse for five months, and then had to move into an inconvenient Airbnb rental. Remember, too, that if you lose access to your kitchen, you might have to spend more on takeout and restaurant meals.

When It Comes to Your Crew...

Hire a general contractor rather than individual installers.

For her mudroom remodel, Lindsay started by parceling out projects to pros affiliated with the big-box stores where she bought the supplies. But she found that they often couldn't problem-solve: When the tile installer discovered the floor wasn't level, he simply left. General contractors know how to troubleshoot and coordinate with a variety of tradespeople—so a carpenter would level the floor, and then a tiler would go in.

Work with a designer to avoid decision fatigue.

Don't get bogged down by small choices, Etienne says. If you're super indecisive, consider getting a designer's help, and request to be presented with just three options to choose from.

Think about bringing in an architect.

When Jennie and her husband decided to update their New York City condo's awkward galley kitchen, they couldn't figure out how to make it flow into the adjacent rooms. "Our indecision dragged on for months, until my friend recommended an architect she knew. I'd thought the job would be too small,

but she said she likes solving that kind of problem and being brought in for just one room." The architect sketched a plan within days.

Lock in the best contractor for the job—even if patience is required.

Landscape architects are often design-and-build firms. You pay for the plan and then also pay for the construction and planting. Due to a scheduling conflict, Andrew and Melissa's deck designer couldn't execute the build for a few months. Rather than wait, the couple jobbed it out to get it done ASAP. "If we'd hired the landscape architects when we liked their plan, we could've saved a lot of hassle, stress, marital tension, and months of living without stairs on any of the entrances to our home," Melissa says.

Specialty materials require specialty install.

When Catherine added a small en suite bath—just 40 square feet—to her principal bedroom in Hastings, New York, she splurged on Moroccan floor tile, which came with very specific installation instructions. "My contractor promised he knew how to work with them," she recalls. "I should have been more pushy, because he didn't—he never even opened the instructions. So if you really look, you can see where the tiles are imperfect."



When It Comes to Supplies...

Limit the places you shop.

To stave off decision overload—and stick to her budget—Lindsay only let herself browse for fixtures and finishes from brands she'd ordered from (and liked) before. For lights, that was Cedar & Moss, and tiles came from TileBar. Her tight budget actually helped hasten her decision-making: "I looked at it as a positive because it automatically narrowed my choices."

See and touch materials in person.

Don't rely on internet images when purchasing supplies. Request samples or swatches for *everything*—from fabric to flooring to landscape materials. Melissa ordered the wrong gravel because an image of crushed granite looked too large online, so she went with one size smaller. It turned out to resemble sandy dirt, which becomes mud when it rains.

Splurge on high-visibility everyday items.

Etienne chose the budget option for kitchen counters but regrets not springing for the Corian she had in her previous home. "The quartz cost half as much—but that doesn't account for how, every single day, I wish I could change them."



When It Comes to Your Space...

Mock up built-ins in 3D.

Just as her kitchen cabinet order was being finalized, Etienne wanted to add an L-shaped bar. To show her how little space they had to work with—and how uncomfortable a bar would be in the room—her architect made one out of tape and furniture so she could fully visualize (and veto) it.

Know that upstairs plumbing affects downstairs walls.

Catherine's new second-floor bathroom didn't stack directly on top of
the downstairs powder room, so her
contractor had to run thin water lines
inside the wall—and a thicker drain
pipe outside the wall. "They did drywall it in, but it's about a six-by-sixinch square that bites into my mudroom," she says. Be prepared to make
necessary adjustments.

THE PROS WEIGH IN FOR GOOD MEASURE

Don't be too kid friendly.

Keep in mind how quickly your kids will outgrow almost everything, Etienne says. Avoid designing spaces for littles: Get the \$20 step stool, not the low bathroom sink that will cost \$500 to reposition in a couple of years.

Think outside the box for doors.

Catherine's favorite part of her bedroom redo is the little walk-in closet, where she maximized every cubic inch with California Closets. For a more dramatic effect than typical closet doors, as well as easier access, she went with floor-to-ceiling patterned drapes. "It looks like art on the wall," she says.

Remember: It's your space, not the next owner's.

When Rory and Jeremy did laundry in the low-ceilinged basement in their Brooklyn, New York, home, they had to hold their heads at 90-degree angles to avoid smacking their foreheads on joists. The only place it made (affordable) sense to relocate the laundry to was the bathroom. And in order to make room for a stacked unit, they'd need to trade the house's only tub for a shower. "Everyone says that a house needs at least one tubfor resale, for potential buyers with little kids. But I do laundry twice a week, and heaven knows the last time anyone took a bath," Rory says. "Bucking convention and giving up the tub was a no-brainer if it meant easy access to the washer and dryer."

"Don't go with the cheapest builder.

If you're trying to save, choose
someone midrange. The cheapest
builder often leaves things out of the
quote, which results in your spending
a lot of time troubleshooting and
may cost you more in the long run."

-SARAH STACEY, INTERIOR DESIGNER IN AUSTIN, TEXAS

"Renovations are dusty, even if you have a very clean contractor.

We will use your bathroom unless you rent a portable toilet. We'll store things in the garage, in the driveway, and on the lawn."

—WAYNE HYMER, RESIDENTIAL CONTRACTOR IN PORTLAND, MAINE

"Be patient with your general contractor. People don't realize how much office work it takes to get to a quote that's going to fall within your budget. A GC will call the plumber, the electrician, the framer, and the demo guy to get availability and prices for that project. All this work goes into creating an estimate without even knowing if the homeowner will hire them for the job."

-JEAN BROWNHILL, FOUNDER
AND CEO OF SWEETEN, AN ONLINE
RENOVATION PLATFORM

"Home buyers often focus on structural changes, like lighting and walls. Floors always get shortchanged. I tell clients to focus on floors first, since once you move in, it's nearly impossible to do them without moving everything back out."

—PARISA M. AFKHAMI, REALTOR AT WARBURG REALTY IN NEW YORK CITY

"Homeowners tend to drastically underestimate or overestimate how long a renovation is going to take. They're often surprised by how much work is required to redesign a room or upgrade a basement. On the flip side, they put off significant home improvements they assume will take too much time, like installing new windows or replacing siding. In reality, those projects could be completed in just a few days or hours. Talk to friends and neighbors and take advantage of online resources, like HomeAdvisor and Angi (previously known as Angie's List), to get a more accurate idea of the timeline."

—EAMON LYNCH, DIRECTOR OF WARRANTY SERVICE AT POWER HOME REMODELING IN CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA

"Don't be afraid to get creative and encourage your tradespeople to do something a little unexpected— especially if you don't have an interior designer to advocate for unusual ideas. Come prepared with inspiration images, ask questions, and explain to them that these unique details are what you're most excited about. Then work together to make them happen."

-KATE LESTER, INTERIOR DESIGNER IN HERMOSA BEACH, CALIFORNIA

"In my experience, even when a new homeowner undertakes a renovation, they're still very concerned about the resale of the property. Unless you're planning to flip the home, it is best to do a renovation and design to suit your and your family's needs. Tastes, style, and trends are always evolving—so embrace what you love."

-NANCY MAYERFIELD, INTERIOR
DESIGNER IN WESTCHESTER, NEW YORK



QUICKLY TACKLE YOUR BEAUTY GOALS

Tick through your ENTIRE SELF-CARE TO-DO LIST thanks to these easy-peasy tips from the best in the biz. Spoiler: You're going to look amazing—and feel even better—when you're done.

by LISA DESANTIS

2

GET ADULT ACNE UNDER CONTROL

Despite what we wished for at our sweet 16 parties, pimples don't vanish, even when we're grown-ups. But with age comes the knowledge of how to treat a breakout. "Sometimes less is more," notes Melissa Kanchanapoomi Levin, MD, founder of Entière Dermatology in New York City. Rather than panicking and throwing everything but (the toothpaste in) the bathroom sink at it, she suggests paring down your routine to these basics.

A gentle cleanser, like Aveeno Calm + Restore Nourishing Oat Cleanser (\$9; at drugstores).

An active treatment, such as a retinoid, benzoyl peroxide, or salicylic acid (but not all three). We like No. 7 Laboratories 2% Salicylic Acid Acne Spot Treatment (\$20; at Walmart).

A mild, oil-free moisturizer, like Summer Fridays Cloud Dew Oil-Free Gel Cream Moisturizer (\$42; sephora.com).

Sunscreen to mitigate postinflammatory hyperpigmentation (the dark spot left behind after a whopper). Olay Regenerist Mineral Sunscreen SPF 30 (\$29; at drugstores) won't clog your pores and send you back to square one.

3

Establish an Anti-Aging Skin-Care Regimen

If you're overwhelmed by all the lotions and potions out there, you'll be relieved to learn that an effective routine consists of just three steps. Levin recommends starting with these products, listed in order of importance.

SUNSCREEN

"The best anti-aging product is sunscreen, worn 365 days a year, whether you're indoors or outdoors," Levin says. Sun exposure poses the biggest threat to skin—causing dark spots, wrinkles, and loss of elasticity. And it's never too late to start mounting your defense.

REAL SIMPLE PICK:

Habit No. 41 Mister (\$30; habitskin.co) doesn't leave a white cast, and it comes in an easy spray format so you can reapply without touching your face.

A RETINOL OR OTHER VITAMIN A DERIVATIVE

If vitamin A were a superhero, its power would be time reversal. This ingredient is heralded for its ability to turn back the clock due to its exfoliation properties, which also help nix breakouts and stimulate collagen.

REAL SIMPLE PICK:

Skinbetter Science
AlphaRet Overnight Cream
(\$125; skinbetter.com) is
one of the least irritating
formulas we've found.
Start by using it once or
twice a week at night, then
gradually build up.

AN ANTIOXIDANT, LIKE VITAMIN C

Most derms recommend wearing a free-radical-fighting serum under your sunscreen. A vitamin C formula is a fave because it helps treat premature aging and reduces sun damage and discoloration. While some sunscreens come spiked with the booster, Levin prefers the potency of a stand-alone serum.

REAL SIMPLE PICK:

In the morning, put on L'Oréal Paris Revitalift Derm Intensives 10% Pure Vitamin C Serum (\$30; at drugstores) before your SPF.



4

DEFUZZ YOUR FACE

There's a thin layer of hair—peach fuzz—on your face, and there are benefits to shaving it off. Yes, you read that correctly. And no, not the same razor you use on your legs: Grab a Dorco Tinkle Eyebrow Razor (\$3 for 3; tinkleusa.com), which is made for fine hairs. Hold your razor at a 45-degree angle and make short, downward strokes, says Joey Healy, a brow expert in New York City. In addition to removing hair, the blade helps slough off dead skin so your face feels silky and makeup goes on more evenly.

5

Schedule a Derm Appointment

Before summer, get a full-body skin check. Here's how to prep for it.

The doctor will examine your skin from head to toe. That includes your nails—a sneaky spot where melanoma can hide—so **remove polish before your appointment.**

Don't bother wearing makeup or putting your hair up, Levin says. The doc will ask you to remove any cosmetics and let your hair down so they can thoroughly look at your skin and scalp.

Be vigilant at home and **keep an eye out for any skin changes.**

This appointment is your chance to alert your provider to anything suspicious. Have a "pimple" that's lasted over a month? Julie Russak, MD, a dermatologist in New York City, says it can't hurt to point it out.

If you're not comfortable going to an office, see if **you can do a virtual consultation.** Up the ante with DermLite Hüd Home Dermatoscope (\$100; dermlite.com), a device that attaches to your phone, magnifies skin, and captures images a doctor can use to make a diagnosis.

If you've been thinking about injectables, **ask the doctor for a consultation** (make sure the practice you visit does both medical and cosmetic dermatology). Levin recommends bringing a pic of yourself from 10 years ago so the derm can see how you've changed with age.





MAKE OVER YOUR MOUTH

Take advantage of your mouth being in hiding (under a mask) and go for slightly more involved treatments.

WHITEN YOUR TEETH "Look for products with clinically proven actives, like hydrogen peroxide," says Lisa Creaven, cofounder of Spotlight Oral Care. Try Crest Whitening Emulsions 1 Minute Apply and Go (\$50; at CVS). Just swipe it on and let it be—the peroxide droplets stay on teeth and whiten throughout the day. No rinsing required.

BRACE YOURSELF Smile Direct Club (from \$89 a month; smiledirect club.com) helps you pull off a straighter smile without a trip to an orthodontist. The company sends an impression kit, you mail it back, and then you receive a series of custom-made weekly aligners.

FAKE FULL—AND FUN—HAIR

Whether you struggle with thinning hair or want to play around with a commitmentfree look, faux clip-ins are comfier and more believable than ever. A few good ones to try:

BANGS: Bellami Cleopatra Clip-In Bangs, \$55; bellamihair.com.

BUN: Insert Name Here Sammy Bun, \$38; inhhair.com.

PONYTAIL: Luxy Hair 16" Ponytail Extension, \$129; luxyhair.com.

FULLNESS: Barefoot Blonde 14" Fill-Ins, \$75; bfbhair.com.



Clear Things Up

Hello, confidence. Goodbye, body bumps and irritation.

KERATOSIS PILARIS,

a.k.a. chicken skin, results from a buildup of keratin in the hair follicle. You can't get rid of it for good, but a chemical exfoliant, like glycolic acid, will make it smoother, Levin says.

REAL SIMPLE PICK: Glytone Exfoliating Body Lotion, \$43; glytone-usa.com.

ECZEMA—those dry, itchy patches—calls for mild formulas with nourishing ceramides.

Posay Cicaplast Baume B5, \$15; ulta.com.

9

BULK UP YOUR BROWS AND LASHES

If you feel like your look is stuck in the '90s, it may be because you still pluck like it's the '90s. Break the cycle with these tips.

FOR BROWS Drop—OK, just hide—the tweezers for two to four months, Healy says. (Same goes for that 10x mirror.) Instead of tweezing, use a peptide-laced serum, like Joey's Brow Renovation Serum (\$125; joeyhealy.com), which transformed our tester's brows.

FOR LASHES Avoid waterproof mascara, Healy says, since all the rubbing to remove it can take a toll on your flutter. Go with a conditioning formula, like Bite Beauty Upswing Full-Volume Mascara (\$28; bitebeauty.com). For temporary oomph, try falsies. LoveSeen has options for a wide variety of eye and lid shapes (from \$20; loveseen.com).



10

Save Money and Time Between Color Appointments

MAKE YOUR COLOR LAST

All hair dye—especially red—fades with each shampoo, "so go at least two days between washes if possible," says Cassondra Kaeding, a celebrity colorist in Los Angeles and Redken ambassador. For a boost, incorporate a colordepositing mask, like Leonor Greyl Color Enhancing Conditioner (\$65; leonorgreyl-usa.com).

make coloring from your couch so much less of an ordeal (and crapshoot). The Madison Reed and Color & Co. websites help you identify your color match through a quiz. Both offer virtual try-ons and live video consultations too. If you're camera shy, Madison Reed lets you chat 24/7 with a team of expert colorists, who can answer questions and walk you through the dyeing process.

HIDE ROOTS WITH INGENUITY

Rock a headband. Switch up your part. Use brow powder or even eye shadow to disguise new growth. If you're blonde with dark roots, spritz on some dry shampoo and don't blend—make the white residue your friend for once. Or touch up with an advanced at-home formula, like dpHue Root Touch-Up Kit (\$32; dphue.com).

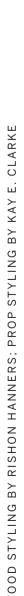
MADE RIGHT. ON THE



HILLSHIRE FARM GAR

FOOD





EASY DINNER 1

Slow Cooker Chicken Tostadas

ACTIVE TIME 15 MINUTES TOTAL TIME 4 HOURS, 15 MINUTES SERVES 4

✓ Make Ahead ✓ Slow Cooker ✓ Gluten-Free ✓ Family Friendly

124 REAL SIMPLE MAY 2021

- 2 white onions, halved
- 1½ lb. boneless, skinless chicken thighs
 - 1 16-oz. jar tomatillo salsa
 - 2 poblano chiles, seeded and cut into 1-in. pieces (about 2 cups)
 - 1 tsp. kosher salt, divided
 - 3 large plum tomatoes, diced (2 cups)
 - 3 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh cilantro leaves
 - 2 Tbsp. fresh lime juice (from 1 lime), plus wedges for serving
 - 8 corn tostadas
- 2½ oz. queso fresco (fresh Mexican cheese), crumbled (about ½ cup)

CHOP 1 onion half to measure ½ cup; set aside. Chop remaining onion halves into 4 wedges each.

stir onion wedges, chicken, salsa, poblanos, and 3/4 teaspoon salt in bowl of a 6-quart slow cooker. Cover and cook on low until tender, 4 to 5 hours. Using 2 forks, shred chicken in slow cooker.

gallo: Stir tomatoes, cilantro, lime juice, reserved chopped onion, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt in a medium bowl. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use or for up to 12 hours.

top each tostada with about 3/4 cup chicken mixture, 2 tablespoons pico de gallo, and 1 tablespoon queso fresco. Serve with lime wedges.

PER SERVING: 525 Calories, 16g Fat (6g Saturated), 11mg Cholesterol, 6g Fiber, 43g Protein, 46g Carbs, 1,901mg Sodium, 14g Sugar

Recipes by Pam Lolley Photographs by Caitlin Bensel



EASY DINNER 2

Creamy Cauliflower Rice with Shrimp

ACTIVE TIME 20 MINUTES TOTAL TIME 20 MINUTES SERVES 4

✓ Quick Cooking ✓ One Pot ✓ Gluten-Free

- 1 medium leek (white and light green parts only), thinly sliced (2 cups)
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 1 12-oz. pkg. fresh riced cauliflower (4 cups)
- ¹/₂ cup low-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth
- 2 oz. fresh baby spinach (2 packed cups)
- ¹/₄ cup heavy whipping cream
- 2 oz. Parmesan cheese, finely shredded (about 3/4 cup), plus more for serving (optional)

HEAT 1 tablespoon oil in a large skillet over medium. Add shrimp and 1/4 teaspoon salt; cook, stirring often, until firm and pink, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a plate. Wipe skillet clean.

HEAT remaining 2 tablespoons oil in skillet over medium. Add leek; cook, stirring often, until tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Add wine; cook, stirring constantly, until wine is fully absorbed, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in cauliflower and broth; cook, stirring often, until broth is fully absorbed, about 3 minutes. Stir in spinach, cream, and remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt; cook, stirring constantly, until spinach wilts, about 2 minutes. Add cheese; cook, stirring constantly, until melted, about 1 minute.

REMOVE from heat and stir in cooked shrimp. Serve immediately with more cheese, if desired.

PER SERVING: 351 Calories, 21g Fat (8g Saturated), 170mg Cholesterol, 3g Fiber, 24g Protein, 13g Carbs, 1,358mg Sodium, 4g Sugar



Sheet Pan Sausage and Veggies

ACTIVE TIME 20 MINUTES TOTAL TIME 20 MINUTES SERVES 4

✓ Quick Cooking ✓ One Pot ✓ Family Friendly



- 1 lb. hot or sweet Italian pork sausages
- 1 lb. multicolored baby bell peppers, halved lengthwise
- 1 pt. grape tomatoes
- 3 shallots, cut into ½-in. wedges (about ¾ cup)
- 3 large cloves garlic, smashed
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 3/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
 Chopped fresh oregano leaves, for serving
- 1 8-oz. loaf crusty French bread, warmed

preheat broiler with rack 6 inches from heat. Line a large, rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil. Pierce sausages a few times with a knife (do not pierce all the way through). Toss sausages, bell peppers, tomatoes, shallots, garlic, oil, salt, and pepper on baking sheet until evenly coated; spread in an even layer.

ring vegetables halfway through, until a thermometer inserted in thickest portion of sausages registers 160°F and vegetables are lightly charred, 12 to 15 minutes. Sprinkle with oregano and serve with warm bread.

PER SERVING: 674 Calories, 44g Fat (14g Saturated), 86mg Cholesterol, 5g Fiber, 25g Protein, 44g Carbs, 1,541mg Sodium, 11g Sugar





EASY DINNER 5

Cheesy Baked Ravioli and Romaine Salad

ACTIVE TIME 25 MINUTES TOTAL TIME 55 MINUTES SERVES 6

✓ Freezable ✓ Make Ahead ✓ Big Batch ✓ Vegetarian ✓ Family Friendly

- ¹/₂ cup plus 3 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
- 1/2 cup chopped yellow onion (from 1 onion)
- 3 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 tsp. dried Italian seasoning
- 1 28-oz. can fire-roasted crushed tomatoes
- 11/4 tsp. kosher salt, divided
 - 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper, divided
 - 1 20-oz. pkg. refrigerated cheese ravioli
 - 8 oz. shredded whole-milk mozzarella cheese (about 2 cups)
 - 2 tsp. lemon zest plus 1/4 cup fresh juice (from 2 lemons)
 - 2 7-oz. romaine lettuce hearts, chopped (about 12 cups)

tablespoons oil in a large skillet over medium. Add onion; cook, stirring often, until tender, about 5 minutes. Add tomato paste and Italian seasoning; cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Add crushed tomatoes and

1/2 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Bring mixture to a simmer over medium; cook, stirring occasionally, until sauce is thickened, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat.

GREASE a 13-by-9-inch or other 3-quart baking dish with 1 table-spoon oil. Spread 1 cup tomato sauce in bottom of dish.

ARRANGE half of ravioli over sauce in baking dish in a single layer, slightly overlapping ravioli. Spread 1 cup tomato sauce evenly over ravioli. Sprinkle with half of cheese. Repeat layers once, using remaining ravioli, tomato sauce, and cheese. Bake until sauce is bubbly and cheese is melted and golden, 30 to 35 minutes.

WHISK lemon zest, lemon juice, and remaining ½ cup oil, ¾ teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper in a large bowl until combined. Add lettuce and gently toss to coat. Serve salad alongside baked ravioli.

PER SERVING: 697 Calories, 44g Fat (12g Saturated), 79mg Cholesterol, 6g Fiber, 24g Protein, 54g Carbs, 1,602mg Sodium, 10g Sugar



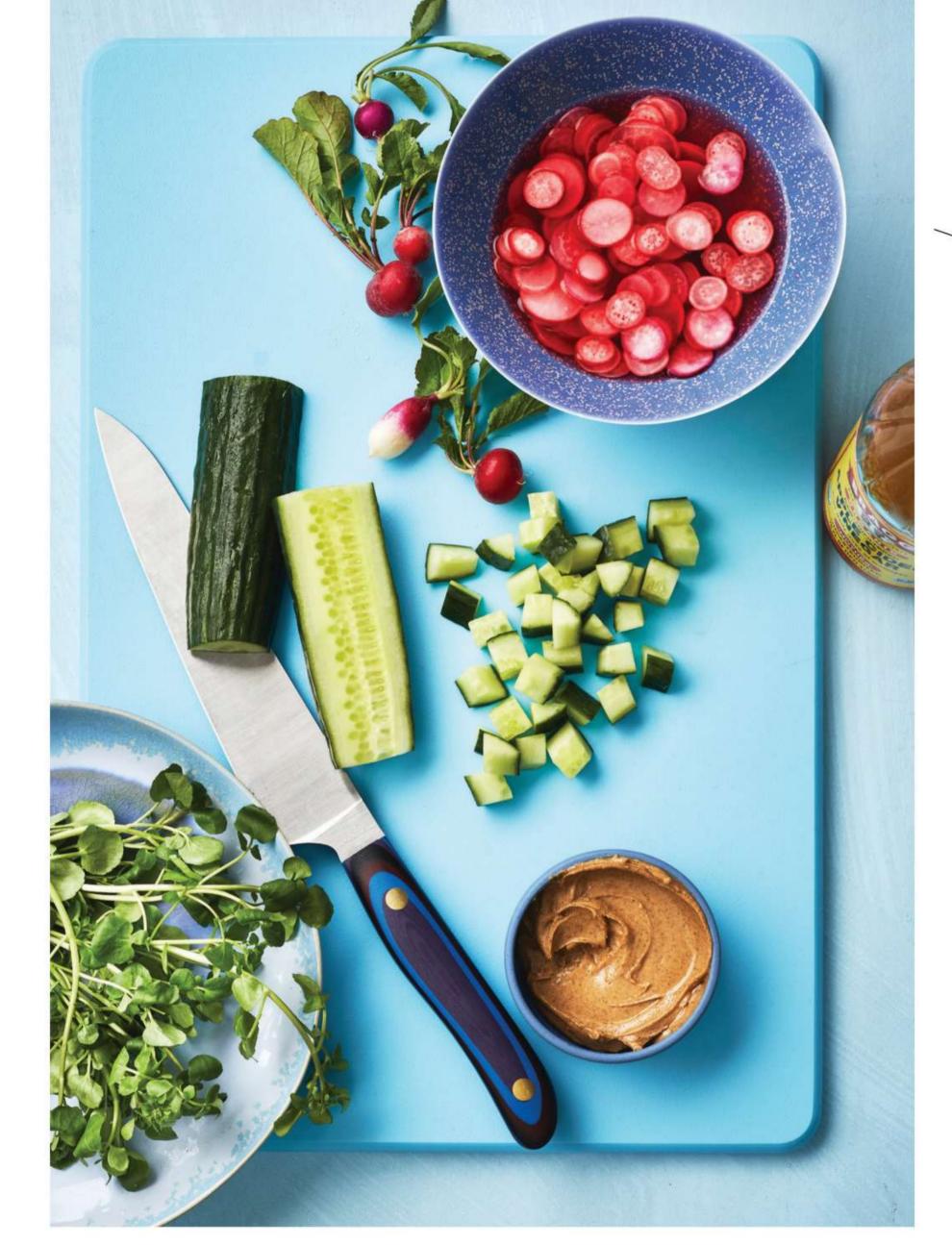


PLANT POWERED

Quick Nutty Noodles

Just a few pantry staples come together to make a silky, slurpable sauce.







THE SCOOP ON ALMOND BUTTER

This spread is good for way more than smearing on toast (though it's pretty fab there). Use it to boost creaminess in sauces and dressings, or swap it in for peanut butter in baking recipes. Look for one made with just almonds and maybe a touch of salt. It's packed with healthy fats, iron, calcium, vitamin E, and fiber.

A vinegar bath turns radishes pink and gives them a tangy pop that balances out the rich sauce.

ACTIVE TIME 15 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 20 MINUTES
SERVES 4

1/2 cup very thinly sliced radishes

1/4 cup apple cider vinegar

13/4 tsp. kosher salt, divided

- 1 English cucumber, chopped (about 13/4 cups)
- 1 8-oz. pkg. soba noodles
- 1/3 cup creamy almond butter
- 2 Tbsp. toasted sesame oil
- 2 cups watercress or other greens

STIR radishes, vinegar, and ½ teaspoon salt in a small bowl, pressing down to submerge radishes as much as possible. Set aside, stirring occasionally, until radishes turn slightly pink, about 15 minutes.

MEANWHILE, bring a pot of water to a boil over high. Toss cucumber and ½ teaspoon salt in a large bowl. Cook noodles in boiling water according to package directions; drain and rinse under cold water to cool. Transfer noodles to bowl with cucumber.

whisk 1/3 cup water, almond butter, oil, and remaining 1 teaspoon salt in a medium bowl until smooth.

Spoon out 3 tablespoons vinegar from radish mixture; whisk vigorously into almond butter mixture until well combined. Add almond butter dressing to noodles and cucumber; toss. Add watercress to bowl and gently toss to coat.

Serve and top with drained radishes.

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Conquer your lunch or dinner in only minutes with Lean Cuisine's crave-worthy comfort foods—all 400 calories or less. There are more than 70 delicious and nutritious recipes to choose from—including high protein, meatless, and more. You'll celebrate the feeling of delicious in every bite.



Let Your Home Bloom

Relax after a long day and treat your home to the garden-inspired scents of Mrs. Meyer's Soy Candles, made with essential oils and other thoughtfully chosen ingredients to keep your home blooming.



Get Sparkling Clean Dishes

Easily cross those dishes off your to-do list with Seventh Generation's Dish Liquid—a grease-fighting dish soap that's Powered by PlantsTM and gets the job done.



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High-quality fabrics from Sunbrella are comfortable, easy-to-clean, and stain resistant. Upgrade your living spaces with fabrics that look and feel as good as they perform.



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Take the guesswork out of doing laundry and clean smart with Swash,™ laundry detergent that dispenses the right amount for every load—no more, no less—so you don't just clean your clothes, you care for them.

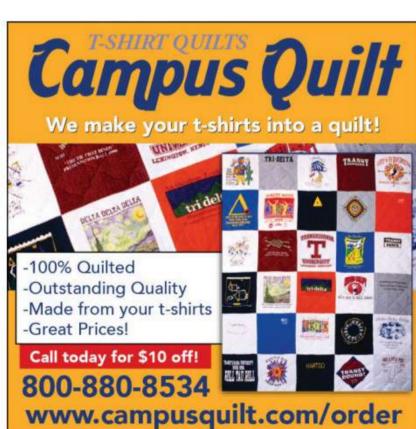
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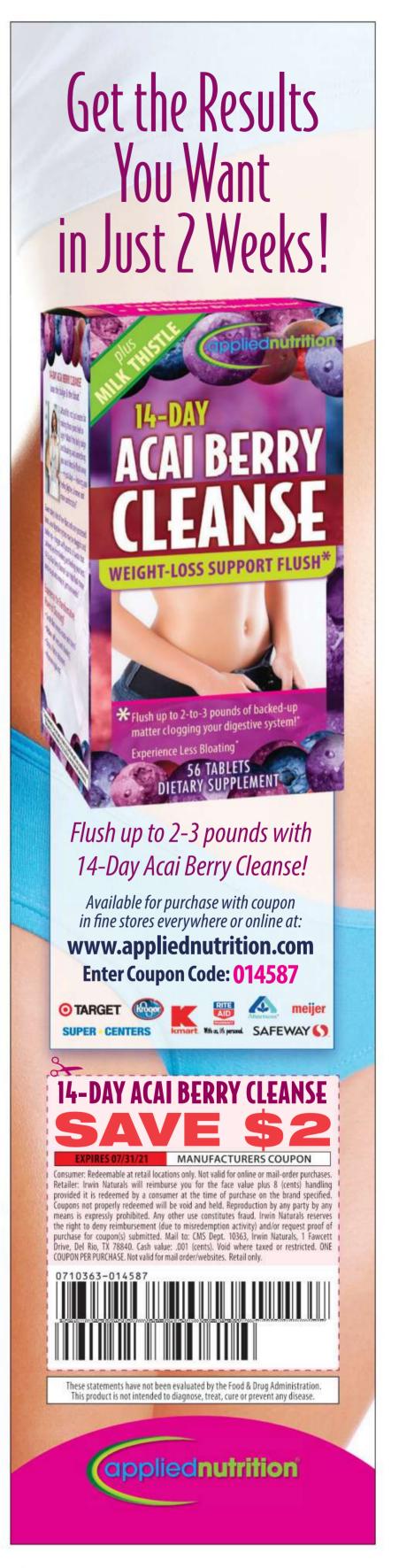












BREATHE

FLOWING FOLDS

Look closely at this image and become quiet and still. Place your hand on your chest or belly and feel your body rise and fall with each inhale and exhale. Let your eyes travel across the image, following the movement of the folds. Sync your breathing to the rise and fall of the smooth green surface. Get into the flow, sensing how everything is in motion—transforming and becoming new. Notice the moments of stillness between each breath that awaken you to the creativity within you.

-JAMIE PRICE, MyLife, a personalized mindfulness app

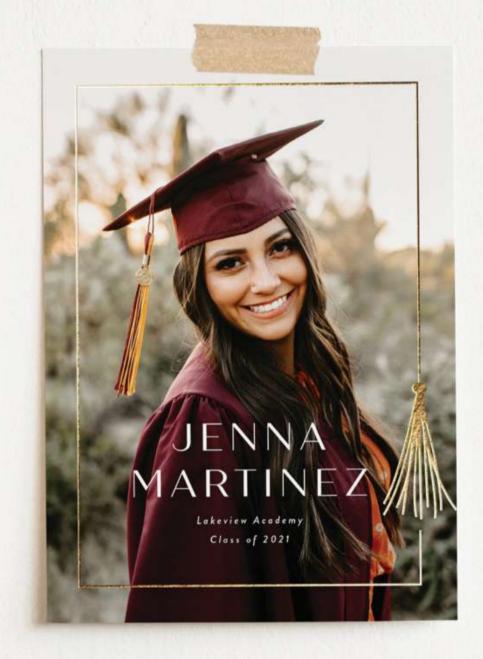




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